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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY AND ALLIES IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST

HEARINGS

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

FEBRUARY 9 AND 10, 2011

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY AND ALLIES IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST, PART 1

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:25 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The committee will come to order. Having been duly organized, this committee will now proceed to our first official hearing of the 112th Congress. After recognizing myself and the ranking member, Mr. Berman, for 7 minutes each for our opening statements, I will recognize the chairman and ranking member of our Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia for 3½ minutes each for their statements. We will then proceed directly to hear testimony from our distinguished witnesses, and I would respectfully remind them to keep their statements to no longer than 5 minutes. I am rather ruthless with this gavel. After we hear from our witnesses, individual members will be recognized for 5 minutes each to question our witnesses. The Chair now recognizes herself for 7 minutes.

Recent developments in Egypt and Lebanon pose great challenges to U.S. policy, to our interest and to our allies in the Middle East. In Lebanon we have witnessed the takeover of the country by the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis. In Egypt we see destabilization of a government which has been a key U.S. ally and partner for over 3 decades. In both instances, successive U.S. administrations failed to develop and implement a longer term strategy to move beyond the status quo and prepare for the future.

In both Egypt and Lebanon we have failed to effectively leverage U.S. assistance in support of peaceful, pro-democracy forces, and to help build strong, accountable, independent, democratic institutions as a bulwark against the instability that is now spreading throughout much of the region. Instead of being proactive, we have been obsessed with maintaining short-term, personality-based stability, stability that was never really all that stable, as the events of recent weeks demonstrate. Successive administrations have repeatedly opposed and obstructed efforts by Members of Congress to require accountability and ensuring Egypt met conditions for its economic assistance.

The Mubarak government has been a reliable and valuable ally of the United States on security matters, but the relationship must extend well beyond Mubarak. It would be short-sighted and potentially dangerous for the United States to base its entire approach to another nation on the survival of one individual.

In the early days of the current unrest the administration failed to seize the opportunity to press for reform, to address the demonstrators' frustrations and prevent chaos and violence.

On January 25th, the first day of the demonstrations, Secretary Clinton stated, "Our assessment is that the Egyptian Government is stable." Vice President Joe Biden, in an interview on January 27th, said, "I would not refer to Mubarak as a dictator."

According to the Wall Street Journal, National Security Council officials admitted in a meeting on January 31 that they did not have a contingency plan in place should the Egyptian Government collapse. Now the White House is reportedly making matters worse by not only reexamining its position on dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood, but also stated that a new Egyptian Government should "include a whole host of important non-secular actors." The Muslim Brotherhood had nothing to do with driving the protests, and they and other extremists must not be allowed to hijack the movement toward democracy and freedom in Egypt.

Turning to Lebanon, we are again confronted by the absence of a long-term U.S. strategy. Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah have acted relentlessly to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty and the United States has largely adopted a reactive posture seeking to contain the advance of these hostile forces. Washington has also persisted in continuing to provide assistance to a Lebanese Government in which Hezbollah essentially had veto power. This included security assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces, LAF, despite longstanding concerns over whether such aid could directly or indirectly benefit Hezbollah.

Even now when the Lebanese Government has been overthrown, the United States has still failed to indicate that it will cut off assistance to a proxy government for Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah.

There are lessons from the Lebanon debacle which are applicable to Egypt. In Lebanon, following the Hariri assassination, elections were immediately held under Syrian-inspired electoral law, laying the foundation for the political empowerment of Hezbollah. Therefore, shouldn't the United States insist that constitutional and administrative requirements concerning the electoral process in Egypt be revised to ensure that only responsible actors who meet certain basic standards participate in Egypt's future? Such criteria should include renouncing violent extremism, upholding the rule of law, recognizing and enforcing Egypt's international commitments, including its nonproliferation obligation and its peace agreement with the Jewish State of Israel.

I would greatly appreciate if our witnesses this morning would address the following questions in their testimony: Can there be stability in Egypt if Mubarak remains in power? Do conditions enable a military control transition process? Would this buy time for legitimate opposition forces to organize and for constitutional modifications to take place? There are some who have suggested that Egypt could follow a Turkey model. How viable is that comparison?

Given that patterns have recently developed in Turkey, could Egypt's adoption of this model lead to possible threats to U.S. interests and allies in the Middle East? Can the legitimate opposition assume a leadership role? Can the military transition to the civil arena? What changes in the Egyptian Constitution would be necessary to ensure that candidates for public office for political leaders are going to act and govern democratically? What criteria are necessary to ensure that radical Islamists are not empowered?

And beyond Egypt and Lebanon the United States must have broader strategic plan for the region so that our interests and our allies are protected and destructive regimes in Tehran and Damascus and other extremists are unable to exert their influence over people yearning for democracy.

These questions are particularly relevant as we commemorate the centennial of the birth of President Ronald Reagan. During his Westminster address Reagan stated, "Any system is inherently unstable that has no peaceful means to legitimize its leaders. While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to declare our ultimate objective and to take concrete actions to move toward them. The objective I propose," according to Ronald Reagan, "is quite simple to state: To foster the infrastructure of democracy."

We face an emergency in Lebanon and Egypt that could spread to the broader Middle East. With cautious determination, we thank our esteemed witnesses for appearing before our committee today and look forward to their testimony.

With that, I am pleased to yield to our ranking member, Mr. Berman.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

CHAIRMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Opening Statement
"Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon:
Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 1"
Wednesday, February 9, 2011

Recent developments in Egypt and Lebanon pose great challenges to U.S. policy, interests, and allies in the Middle East. In Lebanon, we have witnessed the takeover of the country by the Iran-Syria-Hezbollah axis. In Egypt, we see the destabilization of a government which has been a key U.S. partner for over three decades. In both instances, successive U.S. administrations failed to develop and implement a longer-term strategy to move beyond the status quo and prepare for the future.

In both Egypt and Lebanon, we have failed to effectively leverage U.S. assistance in support of peaceful, pro-democracy forces and to help build strong, accountable, independent, democratic institutions as a bulwark against the instability that is now spreading throughout much of the region. Instead of being proactive, we have been obsessed with maintaining short-term, personality-based stability—stability that was never really all that stable, as the events of recent weeks demonstrates.

Successive Administrations have repeatedly opposed and obstructed efforts by Members of Congress to require accountability in ensuring Egypt met conditions for its economic assistance.

The Mubarak government has been a reliable and valuable ally of the United States on security matters. But the relationship must extend well beyond Mubarak. It would be short-sighted and potentially dangerous for the United States to base its entire approach to another nation on the survival of one individual.

In the early days of the current unrest, the Administration failed to seize the opportunity to press for reform to address the demonstrators' frustrations and prevent chaos and violence. On January 25th—the first day of the demonstrations—Secretary Clinton stated that "our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable…" Vice President Joe Biden, in an interview on January 27th, said that "I would not refer to [Mubarak] as a dictator." According to the *Wall Street Journal*, National Security Council officials admitted in a meeting on January 31st that they did not have a contingency plan in place should the Egyptian government collapse.

Now, the White House is reportedly making matters worse by not only reexamining its position on dealing with the Muslim Brotherhood, but also stating that a new Egyptian government should "…include a whole host of important non-secular actors." The Muslim Brotherhood had nothing to do with driving these protests, and they and other extremists must not be allowed to hijack the movement toward democracy and freedom in Egypt.

Turning to Lebanon, we are again confronted by the absence of a long-term U.S. strategy. As Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah have acted relentlessly to undermine Lebanon's sovereignty, the U.S. has largely adopted a reactive posture, seeking to contain the advance of these hostile forces.

Washington has also persisted in continuing to provide assistance to a Lebanese government in which Hezbollah essentially had veto power. This included security assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF), despite longstanding concerns over whether such aid could directly or indirectly benefit Hezbollah. Even now, when the Lebanese government has been overthrown, the United States has still failed to indicate that it will cut off assistance to a proxy government for Iran, Syria, and Hezbollah.

There are lessons from the Lebanon debacle which are applicable to Egypt. In Lebanon, following the Hariri assassination, elections were immediately held under a Syrian-inspired electoral law, laying the foundation for the political empowerment of Hezbollah. Therefore, shouldn't the U.S. insist that constitutional and administrative requirements concerning the electoral process in Egypt be revised to ensure that only responsible actors who meet certain basic standards participate in Egypt's future?

Such criteria should include: renouncing violent extremism, upholding the rule of law, and recognizing and enforcing Egypt's international commitments, including its nonproliferation obligations and its peace agreement with the Jewish State of Israel.

I would greatly appreciate it if our witnesses this morning would address the following questions in their testimony:

- Can there be stability in Egypt if Mubarak remains in power?
- Do conditions enable a military-controlled transition process? Would this buy time for legitimate opposition forces to organize, and for constitutional modifications to take place?
- There are some who have suggested that Egypt could follow a Turkey model? How viable is this comparison? Given patterns that have recently developed in Turkey, could Egypt's adoption of this model lead to possible threats to U.S. interests and allies in the Middle East?
- Can the legitimate opposition assume a leadership role?
- Can the military transition to the civil arena?
- What changes in the Egyptian constitution would be necessary to ensure that candidates for public office are going to act and govern democratically.
- What criteria are necessary to ensure that radical Islamists are not empowered?

Beyond Egypt and Lebanon, the U.S. must have a broader strategic plan for the region, so that our interests and allies are protected, and the destructive regimes in Tehran and Damascus and other extremists are unable to exert their influence over people yearning for democracy.

These questions are particularly relevant as we commemorate the centennial of the birth of President Ronald Reagan. During his Westminster Address, Reagan stated:

> "Any system is inherently unstable that has no peaceful means to legitimize its leaders. ...While we must be cautious about forcing the pace of change, we must not hesitate to

declare our ultimate objectives and to take concrete actions to move toward them. The objective I propose is quite simple to state: to foster the infrastructure of democracy…"

We face an emergency in Lebanon and Egypt that could spread to the broader Middle East. With cautious determination, we thank our esteemed witnesses for appearing before the Committee today, and look forward to their testimony.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman. This hearing could not be more important or timely. The events of the past month across the Middle East have come at a head spinning pace. They are both exciting and daunting. A new dawn is breaking for the people of Egypt. The promise of a democratic transition brings with it new opportunities and freedoms. However, with this change comes uncertainty for our security and the security of our close ally, Israel. We must both ensure that the transition proceeds and seek to ensure that our shared interests are not compromised.

When strongman Ben Ali fled Tunisia on January 14th, few guessed that the next country to be intoxicated by the Arab world's growing embrace of freedom would be Egypt, the long-time cornerstone of U.S. strategy and peacemaking in the Middle East. We had worried about Egypt's income gap, its illiteracy, its poverty, its denial of fundamental human rights. We had debated leadership succession issues as President Mubarak's health faltered, and we knew Egyptians, who often seemed to endure the unbearable and do so with good humor, have a history of rising up every other generation or so. But we never guessed that the next Egyptian revolution would begin in Tunis.

The mass demonstrations in Cairo have already produced stunning results: The decision that neither Hosni Mubarak nor his son Gamal nor Omar Suleiman will run for President in September. They have also instigated talks on the future of Egypt between the government and various parties, including the Muslim Brotherhood, a moment which has formally been banned from politics in Egypt since its founding in 1928.

Hosni Mubarak has been a friend of the United States, however flawed. We didn't put the Mubarak government in power, but we supported it because it pursued regional policies we generally supported. And with our large foreign assistance we incentivized it to pursue those policies.

While we can't determine Egypt's future leader, we should use our influence to encourage a process of change that is orderly and a government whose foreign and security policies support our interests. As this change takes hold, we must keep firmly in mind that our goals include an Egypt that supports close relations with the United States, supports the welfare of the Egyptian people, democracy, universal human rights, is secular in orientation, and of course adheres to the peace treaty with Israel.

In any transition the military will play a critical role, as it is already doing. That is why I think it is important that our military assistance program continue, so as long as, and only if, the military

is playing a constructive role in bringing about a democratic transition. Based on their writings, I know there is disagreement among the panelists on this issue, and I look forward to the discussion.

Egypt has long needed a more inclusive government, responsive to the desires of its citizens. If a stable democracy is to emerge, there must be participation by a wide array of political forces that are fully committed to democratic principles. Like many, however, I am skeptical about the Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to democracy. The Brotherhood wants Egypt to be governed by religious law rather than man-made law, a problematic position for a democrat. It has a bloody history and even after it renounced violence and endorsed democracy in the 1970s, some of its alumni joined the ranks of the world's most notorious murderers. Included in those ranks are Sadat's assassins and al-Qaeda's Ayman al-Zawahiri.

Some Egyptians of impeccable democratic credentials say the Brotherhood has changed and that it is now truly democratic in its approach. But even if that is true, we shouldn't fool ourselves. Even in the best case scenario where the Brotherhood proves itself fully committed to democracy, there is every reason to believe it will try to influence the Egyptian Government in ways that undermine U.S. interests and it will make Egypt a regressive and less tolerant place.

Mubarak has already made clear that his presidency will end in September and that his son Gamal will not succeed him. It is critical that Egyptians agree as soon as possible on relevant constitutional amendments and laws and a clear and certain timetable for their implementation if free and fair elections are to be held in September. The less time that the opposition has to prepare for elections, the more likely it is that the next President will be determined either by Mubarak's National Democratic Party or by the Muslim Brotherhood, by far the two most organized political forces as of now.

I would like to say a few words about Lebanon, where a handpicked Hezbollah candidate is on the verge of becoming Prime Minister. It is a very troubling example of how democratic development can go off the tracks when a party doesn't respect democratic ground rules. Hezbollah's parliamentary faction is but a political front for a cut-throat militia. And more than anything else that has put the terrorist group in the political driver's seat. If you don't believe me, ask Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader who left Saad Hariri's March 14th Movement and threw his support to Hezbollah. It is an all but open secret that he did so in physical fear of Hezbollah.

As Hezbollah gradually assumes control over more of the levers of power in Lebanon, we must be both wise and firm in our response. I will be introducing legislation called the Hezbollah Anti-Terrorism Act. Following on the Palestinian Anti-Terrorist Act, which passed Congress following Hamas' election to leadership in the PA in 2006, my bill will set rigorous requirements for the provision of foreign assistance to Lebanon during periods where Hezbollah is part of the Lebanese Government. The goal will be to ensure that none of our assistance to Lebanon benefits Hezbollah in any way. We certainly want to assist our friends in Lebanon, and we will. But we also want to make sure that we don't inadvert-

ently help our enemies at the same time. My legislation leaves ample scope for both.

I look forward to the testimony of our three witnesses and particularly their views on how the United States can encourage a responsible democratic transition in Egypt on the goals I previously laid out, what the chances are that such a transition will occur, and what they foresee is the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt during that transition and beyond.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. I thank my good friend for his remarks, and now I will recognize Mr. Chabot for 3½ minutes. He is the chairman on the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chairman. So we can get to the witnesses sooner I will not take the full 3 minutes. I will be very brief. I want to thank you for holding these very timely hearings this morning, and I know we all look forward to hearing from this very distinguished panel of witnesses.

When I was recently appointed chairman of the Middle East and South Asia Subcommittee, having served on the subcommittee for a number of years, I knew we would be dealing with a host of important issues in a critical part of the world. I don't know that anyone, however, anticipated that we would be confronted with so many developments in the region quite so quickly, not just in Egypt and Lebanon, which we will be focusing on in the next 2 days, but in Tunisia and throughout the broader region. Clearly in the case of Egypt we have come to a crossroads. And while we do not yet know how the current volatile situation in that nation will play out, I think we all realize that we are going to have to reassess our bilateral relationship not only in terms of diplomacy but in the area of economic assistance as well.

The current situation, however, is not limited, as I mentioned before, to Egypt. The widespread protests throughout numerous countries in the region raise broader concerns regarding U.S. foreign policy more generally as well as how we administer foreign aid.

I look forward to being involved in these important discussions as we move ahead both here and in the full committee with you, Madam Chair, and in the subcommittee, both of which I am sure will be quite busy.

So we can get to the witnesses, as I mentioned before, I am going to yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Chabot. Now I would now like to recognize Mr. Ackerman, the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, for 3½ minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you and congratulations, Madam Chair.

In Egypt I fear we are snatching failure from the jaws of success. After progressively escalating pressure on President Mubarak, after rejecting regime-backed violence against peaceful protests, after denouncing the regime's assault on journalists, after carefully positioning the United States on the side of the protesters, the Obama administration now appears to be wavering on whether America really backs the demands of the Egyptian people or just wants to return to stability with a facade of change.

The contradiction that is forming between the administration's rhetoric and its policy concerns the so-called national dialogue initi-

ated by Egypt's new Vice President, General Omar Suleiman. General Suleiman is a strong, serious, and capable man, but it is still unclear whether his job is to lead Egypt's transition on behalf of the Egyptian people or to delay it, sidetrack it, flim-flam it into irrelevance on the part of President Mubarak.

The major items on the Egyptian reform agenda are well-known: An end to restrictions on free speech and free press, an end to restrictions on the formation and operation of political parties, an end to the constantly abused emergency law, and an end to structural impediments to free and fair elections.

What have the Egyptian people seen so far? A dialogue with the opposition that excludes major opposition leaders but does include regime allies, a proposed committee to report on the reforms that the government has no obligation to adopt or even consider, a promise to lift the state of emergency when the government considers that it is appropriate, a pledge to liberalize media and communication without any definition of what constitutes liberalization.

The Secretary of State, to her credit, insists that with regard to the General Suleiman-led dialogue "the people themselves and the leaders of various groups within Egyptian society will ultimately determine whether it is or is not meeting their needs," she warns. "We are going to wait and see," she says, "how this develops but we have been very clear about what we expect." I wish we were that clear.

Respecting Egyptian sovereignty is one thing, maintaining a level of ambiguity so thick that ordinary Egyptians cannot discern whether or not we are on their side is something else altogether. Our national security interests require much greater clarity. The people yearn to be free.

How refreshing is it to see people who are not trampling our flag in the streets as they raise theirs? How inspiring is it to see people in that part of the world ready to die for their children's future instead of sending their children off to die? The people yearn to be free. We must plant ourselves firmly on their side.

Until there is evidence that a real transition is underway, with the exception of aid for humanitarian needs or with the transition, we need to suspend our aid to Egypt. We simply cannot afford to be viewed in Egypt as the bank-rollers of repression. The people yearn to be free.

I cannot help but muse if Charlton Heston were to be appointed the Special Envoy to Egypt, he would stand there speaking softly with a big stick in hand and say to President Mubarak, "Your people have let you go."

Thank you, Madam chair.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

In the interest of time and since our witnesses are well-known in their field, I will refrain from the lengthier bios and will proceed immediately to recognize Elliott Abrams, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and former deputy national security adviser, for his remarks.

Elliot will be following by Lorne Craner, president of the International Republican Institute and former assistant secretary of state for democracy human Rights and labor. And rounding off our

distinguished panel is Dr. Robert Satloff, who is the executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

Mr. Abrams, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE ELLIOTT ABRAMS, SENIOR FELLOW FOR MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS

Mr. ABRAMS. Thank you, Madam Chairman and members of the committee. It is a privilege and an honor to testify at this first Foreign Affairs Committee hearing of the new Congress, and it is a pleasure to return to this room where I first testified to this committee 30 years ago under, if I remember right, Chairman Zablocki's chairmanship, your predecessor here.

There is enough ground here for about a dozen hearings, but I want to try to make six points this morning, and I would ask that my full statement be submitted for the record.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection, they all will. Thank you.

Mr. ABRAMS. First, the uprisings we have seen in Tunisia and Egypt are exciting proof that the thirst for freedom is indeed universal. The Middle East has lagged behind the rest of the world in moving toward democracy. There has been a freedom deficit.

President Bush was right when he adopted a freedom agenda for the Middle East. He asked in 2003, "Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they alone never to know freedom, never even to have a choice in the matter?" And he gave the answer, "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe, because in the long run stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty."

Supporting freedom is our best policy in the Middle East as it is in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and everywhere else. Dictators, Presidents for life, stolen elections, government-controlled press are all a formula for instability. And we can just see in Egypt, after 30 years of Hosni Mubarak, in fact there is great instability and the Muslim Brotherhood is stronger than ever.

Second point, American policy in the region should accordingly favor democracy and countries that are moving toward reform. This means one building block for us should be our alliance with Israel, the region's only established democracy. We should value and enhance our relations with countries such as Jordan and Morocco where reform efforts are underway.

It means that warming up to Syria sends exactly the wrong message, that we don't care about human rights and democracy. We don't even care when a country is very hostile to the United States. That we sent an ambassador to Syria at exactly the moment when Hezbollah is taking over the Government of Lebanon sends the wrong message. We must actively press for democracy, not only in Tunisia and Egypt, but in Iran and Syria as well. Democracy promotion cannot be a policy applied to American allies while America's enemies are forgotten.

Third, the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria and several other countries should persuade us once and for all that the link-

age argument, that every problem in the Middle East is really tied to the Israeli-Palestinian, is false. None of those events had to do anything with Israel and the Palestinians.

Fourth, we should use our assistance program, as you said, Madam Chairman, to promote democracy. There is often a disconnect. I think we should make clear to Egypt's military right now that the $1 billion a year they get is not owed to them. Their conduct will determine how much aid they get.

The late Tom Lantos used to ask, "What do you think Egypt actually needs, more tanks or more schools?" And I think it is a question we need to ask today. If the Egyptian military blocks reform and democracy in Egypt, those aid dollars can be better spent in countries where the military in supporting progress.

Fifth point, this aid question applies to Lebanon as well, and I would make the same point about our aid to the Lebanese military. If they are in fact fighting terrorism and guarding the border with Syria, then they should get our help, but if they are not, then that aid it seems to me should be suspended. It should be conditional, as in Egypt, on the actual performance of the military.

Finally, how do we support democracy? I urge the committee to take a look at the National Endowment for Democracy, for the State Department and USAID programs, to the broadcasting that we do to see if we can do better and leverage the money that we spend more effectively.

I will stop there, Madam Chairman. We have a number of speakers, and I look forward to your questions, and thank you again for inviting me here today.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Abrams follows:]

COUNCIL on FOREIGN RELATIONS

February 9, 2011

Egypt, Lebanon, and American Policy in the Middle East

Prepared statement by
Elliott Abrams
Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

Before the
Committee on Foreign Affairs
United States House of Representatives
First Session, One Hundred Twelfth Congress

Hearing on "Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East"

Madam Chairman and Members of the Committee,

It is a privilege and an honor to testify at this first Foreign Affairs Committee hearing of the new Congress. It is a pleasure to return to this room, where I first testified to this Committee thirty years ago when Clement Zablocki served as chairman.

There's enough ground to cover today for a dozen hearings but I will try to be brief—and make six points about recent developments and U.S. policy. I ask that my full statement be printed in the record.

First: The uprisings we have seen in Tunisia and Egypt are exciting proof that the thirst for freedom is indeed universal. The Middle East has lagged behind the rest of the world in moving toward democracy. In a famous analysis in 2002, the Arab Human Development Report (written entirely by Arab experts) noted that "There is a substantial lag between Arab countries and other regions in terms of participatory governance. The wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and Eastern Europe and much of Central Asia in the late 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab States. This freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development."

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President Bush was right when he adopted a Freedom Agenda for the Middle East. In 2003 he asked, "Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they alone never to know freedom and never even to have a choice in the matter?" And he gave the answer: "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe - because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty." As we have seen, neither President Ben Ali nor President Mubarak could build stability through despotism. Even now, we hear many arguments that what we should be pursuing in Egypt and throughout the Middle East is stability. But as President Bush said in 2007, "The problem is that pursuing stability at the expense of liberty does not lead to peace -- it leads to September the 11th, 2001. The policy of tolerating tyranny is a moral and strategic failure. It is a mistake the world must not repeat in the 21st century."

And in fact Hosnia Mubarak will leave behind a Muslim Brotherhood that is stronger than ever because he viciously repressed moderates and centrists in his effort to stay in power. The Brotherhood thrived underground and in the mosques, while a moderate who had the audacity to run against President Mubarak in 2005, Ayman Nour, was then imprisoned for four years. This suggests that Egypt's forthcoming transition to democracy will be extremely difficult and may falter, because the Mubarak regime did literally nothing in 30 years to prepare Egypt for it. The Administration was warned about all of this a year ago, and told that if Mubarak stole the November 2010 parliamentary elections and tried to install his son as his successor, Egypt was in for real turbulence. He did both— and now Egypt is reaping the whirlwind. Egyptians were not going to accept sixty years of Mubaraks, two consecutive Presidents for Life, and a continuation of the State of Emergency for another three decades. Unfortunately that advice to the Administration was not heeded—or not well enough anyway; the Administration was largely passive and hardly reacted when Mubarak stole yet another election last Fall.

The key point is that a policy of supporting freedom is our best policy in the Middle East as it is in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and everywhere else. Dictators, presidents for life, stolen elections, and a government-controlled press are all a formula for instability; democracy is the path to real stability and supporting the expansion of democracy should be our nation's policy.

Second: American policy in the region should accordingly favor democracies and countries that are moving toward reform. That means one building block for us should be our alliance with Israel, the region's only established democracy. The Israelis are very much on edge now, watching Hizballah grow stronger in Lebanon and wondering what Egypt's future policies will be like. Now is not the time for policies that make impossible demands on Israel or that unsettle its politics further. Instead we should try to close the gaps between the United States and Israel that have opened in the last two years, and rebuild our relations. Favoring democracies and those on the road to reform mean we should also value and enhance our relations with countries such as Jordan and Morocco, where reform efforts are under way. And it means that warming up to Syria sends exactly the wrong message—that we don't care about human rights and democracy, and that we don't even care when a country follows policies of deep hostility to the United States. That the United States sent an ambassador to Syria at exactly the moment when Hizballah was taking over the government of Lebanon made us look weak and even foolish.

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For we must actively press for democracy not only in Tunisia and Egypt, but in Iran and Syria as well. Democracy promotion cannot be a policy applied to American allies while America's enemies are forgotten. The people of Iran have made it clear that they abhor the clerical tyranny that rules their country and would like nothing more than the freedoms being won in Tunisia and Egypt. We should be relentless in denouncing the massive human rights violations in Syria and Iran: the abuse of political prisoners, the lack of freedom of thought, assembly, speech, and press, and the phony elections. The sooner the tide of democracy reaches those shores the better off and safer we in the United States will be.

Third: the events in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, and several other Middle Eastern states should persuade us once and for all that the linkage argument—that every problem in the region is really tied to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—is false. None of those events had anything to with Israel and the Palestinians.

Fourth: US strategy in the region should use our assistance programs, economic and military, to help those building democratic systems and respecting human rights. Too often there's a disconnect; we make speeches about human rights but we wink at violations. This is not to say we should insult friendly rulers, or break alliances, but we should be much clearer about our values and our hopes—about which side we are on in the struggle for change and reform. The Congress and several Administrations debated for years cutting back aid to Egypt to show our deep displeasure with human rights violations there, but we did not do it. That was a mistake. We should make it clear to Egypt's military right now that the billion dollars a year they get is not owed to them; they have no right to it because of what Anwar Sadat did decades ago. Their conduct must determine how much aid they get—and what kind. I am always reminded of a question the late Tom Lantos once put to me: do you think Egypt needs more tanks, or more schools? If the Egyptian military blocks reform and democracy in Egypt, those aid dollars can be far better spent in countries where the military is supporting progress instead of preventing it.

Fifth: The question of assistance applies as well to Lebanon, and my fifth point is that despite the drama in Tunisia and Egypt events in Lebanon compel our attention. For the actions taken by Hizballah this year constitute a menace to Lebanon and to American interests there and throughout the region. Hizballah has moved from seeking a minority role in the government after the 2005 elections; to using brute force in May 2008 to take the streets of Beirut and threaten all those who opposed its terrorist policies; to seeking a majority in the cabinet now, through alliances that it has created again through brute force. Hizballah wishes to rule Lebanon—behind a Sunni face to be sure, for the constitution of that country requires a Sunni prime minister. But no one will be in any doubt who really holds power.

What then should be our policy toward Lebanon? We should continue to tell the truth about what is happening, and warn against the ways in which Hizballah in alliance with Syria and Iran is taking over that country—against the wishes of the vast majority of its citizens. Our own relations with Lebanon henceforth should depend on the conduct of the new government. Does it respect human rights and civil liberties? Does it comply with UN Security Council resolutions 1559 and 1701, which require disarmament of all militias and control of the Syrian border, or does it wink at further armament of Hizballah by Iran and Syria? Does it support the Special Tribunal for Lebanon or seek to subvert it? We should be making it very clear right now that our relationship with the next government of Lebanon will depend on the answers. We should not be using our aid programs to make life easier for Hizballah by subsidizing the economy of Lebanon if Lebanon is failing all these tests. And if Prime Minister Mikati fails all those tests and governs on behalf of Hizballah, I hope we will not welcome him in Washington.

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What about assistance to the Lebanese army? I was serving in the Bush Administration when the March 14 movement won the 2005 election and took over the government, and the United States began a significant aid program for the Lebanese Armed Forces or LAF. Our hope was that we would strengthen the LAF as an alternative force to Hizballah, one that could limit Hizballah's power. Sadly this has not proved to be the case at all. The LAF did not act in May 2008 when Hizballah took over the streets of Beirut, nor has it ever interfered with Iran's arms supplies to Hizballah across the Syrian-Lebanese border. On the other hand, it has acted against Al Qaida affiliates in Lebanon and maintained, in some cases, close contact with American officials.

Before you allow any further aid to the LAF, I believe this Committee should ask the new government of Lebanon and the LAF leadership to specify what the mission of the LAF will be. If they are serious about counter-terrorist activities or guarding the border, we should be willing to help—but only with clear guidelines that allow you see if goals are being met or even seriously attempted. If the LAF is acting seriously to protect Lebanon's people and its sovereignty, they will deserve our aid. But we should make it very clear now that if it allows more weapons to cross into Lebanon from Syria, if it refuses to defend the people of Lebanon from Hizballah, if it winks at Hizballah arms deliveries and depots in southern Lebanon, if it promotes Hizballah agents and loyalists to key posts, the reaction will be swift: Our aid will stop.

Where I come out, then, is to suggest a healthy IMET program that maintains contacts with LAF officers, and careful and conditional targeting of aid. The program of the last few years was based on false assumptions about the LAF and should undergo a thorough review and a reduction in size. Making the assistance conditional will help patriotic Lebanese resist Hizballah pressures and will strengthen those in the LAF who wish it to be a force serving Lebanon rather than covering up for Hizballah. But if these tests cannot be met, aid to the LAF cannot be justified.

Sixth: My sixth and final point returns to the first, about supporting democracy. Are we doing all we can? I urge the Committee to take a broad look. Look at our broadcasting efforts through VOA, RFE/RL, and the radios; is the Broadcasting Board of Governers functioning properly? Look at our aid programs, those of USAID and State, and agencies like the National Endowment for Democracy and Republican and Democratic institutes. How is democracy promotion faring? Look at the way we are training our foreign service officers, for example, to meet the challenges we see before us in the Middle East. Does the State Department value and reward those officers who are most effective not at smooth relations with hostile regimes but instead at warm relations with democratic dissidents? Does the Foreign Service Institute teach new recruits how to support those building democracy? Do AID mission directors realize that the smooth relations they often prefer—so that they can pursue their health or education programs—may make us complicit with repressive regimes that most Americans abhor? Is the State Department's Human Rights Defenders Fund working, and is it funded? Have our ambassadors been instructed to follow in this decade what President Bush ordered them to do in 2007: "Seek out and meet with activists for democracy. Seek out those who demand human rights."

Madam Chairman, thank you for beginning your tenure here with this hearing. The Middle East is changing before our eyes from a place of seemingly unending stasis and repression into an unpredictable crossroads where popular dissent, demonstrations, and demands clash with regimes unaccustomed to sharing power with the people. The United States cannot determine the outcome of these developments, but in my view

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we should welcome the demands that this region's "freedom deficit," along with its economic and social deficits, must now be addressed by those who govern there. As Americans we must always find attractive the demand that governments must rule for the people, and that tyranny must end. There's danger ahead to be sure, but the cause of freedom compels our support.

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Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Abrams. Now we are pleased to recognize Mr. Craner for 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE LORNE CRANER, PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE (FORMER ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND LABOR)

Mr. CRANER. Chairman, Congressman Berman, members of the committee, thanks for the opportunity to testify today, especially at your first hearing.

As has occurred all too often in the past, the United States today stands surprised by foreign revolutions. These events will have consequences for the region and, as I will argue later, further afield. Although a single wave of reform is unlikely, the spread of technology means citizens in Arab countries are no longer isolated. Most importantly, especially after events in Egypt, the historic center of the Middle East, any popular belief that the Arab regimes are too powerful to be overthrown should be ending.

In the region subtle national differences means events will take on uniquely local flavors in each country. That said, we can categorize the region's nations helps in a way that helps us determine which may be the most problematic. Counterintuitively, problematic consequences are less likely in most of the regions monarchies than in the republics. Beginning about 15 years ago almost all the regions monarchies, mostly young kings who had been educated abroad, to one degree or another began to modernize their countries economically and politically.

A second reason we are less likely to see consequences in monarchies is that they all project greater legitimacy by virtue of their hereditary, often tribal lineage. In combination with the nascent liberalization, this enables them to deflect economic and political complaints to new governing institutions. This is what we are seeing today in Jordan and Kuwait, where the object of protestors' ire is the Prime Minister and the government.

It will be important for the region's monarchies to be able to show continued progress in opening up their political and economic systems. It is worrisome, for example, that some of the Gulf countries has slowed reforms or even backtracked the last few years, and of course reforms in Saudi Arabia have been so glacial as to make an exception to this rule.

It is the region's republics that will be most affected by recent events. They are run by men who at best have rigged elections and now have decreasingly credible claims to leadership. The fate of these leaders is more directly dependent on their performance, which for most has been sorely lacking. The leaders have stalled economic and political reforms for decades, and we have already seen demonstrations in Yemen, a country run not unlike Egypt but with less stability and a serious al-Qaeda element.

Clearly Israel, which had regarded its security threatened more by Iran than by countries with which it shared borders, will have to recalculate, and our closest ally in the region will require much reassurance and support from Washington.

When I testified last June before this committee, I noted that the administration had not yet begun to implement a strategy to ad-

vance democracy abroad because it had to strategy. Since that time the beginnings of a strategy have been rolled out by Secretary Clinton in Krakow and by President Obama at the UNGA meeting. The administration is focusing democracy work on supportive civil society organizations working to achieve change from the bottom up, and Secretary Clinton deserves great credit for conceiving and then enunciating this policy.

Despite these pronouncements, however, implementation lags. In Egypt, for example, the administration had responded to building pressure, not with increased support to civil society. Instead, it agreed to the Mubarak government demands for signoff on all USAID funded democracy assistance, which obviously precluded programmatic support to many of the NGOs that represent moderate secular interests committed to reform. This played into a decades-long dynamic that made the United States choose between Mubarak and the Brotherhood.

U.S. democracy assistance to Jordan and Lebanon exhibits many of the same failings. IRI and our sister organization, NDI, constantly struggle to convince USAID of the value of assisting Jordan's fledgling political parties resulting in minimal assistance. In Lebanon, even as the United States pulled closer to Syria, our political party programming for March 14th coalition parties, the only counterweight to Hezbollah, was cut short.

Now this failure to cultivate the generation of democratic leaders is not new. It was not until the Musharraf regime began to crumble in 2007 that the Bush administration scrambled to determine who might succeed him and establish relations with Pakistani figures they thought would help advance American interests. But this case was notable more as an exception. In places like Ukraine, Georgia, and Kyrgyzstan the U.S. Government had acidulously cultivated democratic successors.

The Obama administration has already faced this issue in Kyrgyzstan last April. As the increasingly authoritarian government crumbled, dissidents outside complained that our Embassy had refused to meet them for months or years, and we feared the loss of our base at Manas. Realism valuing stability in our relations abroad gained currency after Iraq, but being so closely tied to authoritarians does not serve U.S. interests when a repressive government fails. As we are learning yet again, when we necessarily have relations with authoritarian governments we must plan for the day when they are no longer in power.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Craner follows:]

TESTIMONY OF LORNE W. CRANER
PRESIDENT
INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
FEBRUARY 9, 2011

"In the end, in Iran, all our investment in an individual, rather than in the country, came to naught. When the Shah fell, our Iran policy fell with him. All the billions we had spent there only exacerbated conditions and contributed to the rise of a fundamentalist regime implacably opposed to us to this day." – Colin Powell, My American Journey (1995)

"The lesson from these events is that America should be anticipating democratic traditions long before a crisis makes them urgent - trying to encourage the leadership and institutions that will make eventual change less traumatic. These efforts in Egypt were halfhearted and inconsistent.... An active democracy promotion strategy - engaging authoritarian regimes while cultivating the leaders and parties that may replace them - is alternately criticized as paternalistic, unrealistic and hypocritical. Until a moment such as this, when it is revealed as the essential, practical work of American diplomacy." – Michael Gerson, The Washington Post (February 1, 2011)

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, Congressman Berman and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the consequence of recent events in the Middle East. Chairman Ros-Lehtinen, the series of statements you have made on the Egyptian situation have been the least ambiguous and most supportive of democracy of any U.S. government official. I thank you for this.

As has occurred all too often in the past, the United States today stands surprised by a revolution in a foreign country. In Egypt, the United States is scrambling to learn what form of government will succeed Hosni Mubarak's regime, and who will lead it. Our nation is in the same position in Tunisia, after a revolution that preceded and inspired events in Egypt. And events in Lebanon were equally surprising.

Why are events in Egypt taking the U.S. and more broadly the international community by surprise? Even before Tunisia, Egyptian activists had been protesting things like Egypt's controversial Emergency Law both online and in front of parliament. However, the success of Tunisian democratic protestors in ending President Ben Ali's 23-year rule spurred Egypt's disgruntled population to action. As Ben Ali fled Tunisia, rumblings in Egypt turned into full fledged protests. Egyptian riot police and plainclothes security forces attempted to maintain control of the streets but the protestors' chants nonetheless began to call for Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to meet the same fate as Ben Ali, as thousands in cities across Egypt swarmed the streets; in Cairo, occupying the symbolic Liberation (Tahrir) Square.

Despite an Internet blackout, media curbs and mobile phone service suspension, the intensity of protests persisted and the upheaval escalated after pro-Mubarak supporters clashed violently with opposition protesters. Egyptian police forces were replaced by the Egyptian Army and a curfew was set in place. Although President Mubarak has announced he will not seek re-election, the

suggestion that he will serve out his current term in office is not accepted by many demonstrators who continue to insist that he must step down now.

As of today, several tracks for negotiation have been opened with many, including the United States, saying an orderly transition should begin now. Some of the opposition has indicated a willingness to speak to Egyptian Vice President Suleiman while others maintain Mubarak must step down before negotiations occur. An important question at this moment is whether those taking part in talks represent the protesters in Liberation Square who appear insistent Mubarak step down. With no agreed upon timetable for negotiations to be completed and a lack of clarity on who speaks for the opposition the situation is uncertain.

The seeming failure of Lebanon's Cedar Revolution, with the recent ascent of Hezbollah in ending the March 14-led unity government and replacing it with its preferred Prime Minister Najib Mikati only adds to the Middle East's uncertainty. Lebanon continues to struggle with serious issues related to the country's future direction, meddling by Syria and Iran and confessional alliances in a state of flux, even as U.S. interest in its fate changed with our "engagement" with Syria.

These events will have consequences for the region and, as I will argue later, further afield. Because of its historical and cultural prominence what happens in Egypt will have far greater meaning. With a civilization dating back 5,000 years, Egypt is considered a center of thought in the Arab world, and well into the 20th century led political currents in the region. Cairo's only traditional rival for such historical and cultural status has been Baghdad. As a democratic form of government slowly begins to take shape in Iraq, having similar political development in Cairo could have great consequences for the region. Conversely, given the violent birth of, and halting steps towards, democracy in Iraq, chaos or a more repressive government in Egypt will discourage and further delay much needed reform in the region.

IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNTRIES IN THE REGION

There will be fallout from these events across the region. When democracy emerges in nations experiencing it for the first time, the results are varied and unpredictable. Democratization comes in many forms – slow and fast, civic and political, evolutionary and revolutionary – and future trajectories are difficult to predict.

Although a single wave of reform is unlikely, the spread of information technology, social media use and satellite television during the past decade means citizens in Arab countries are no longer isolated from one another anymore, and the repercussion of events in Tunisia and Egypt are being felt by all. Most important, any popular belief that the region's regimes are too powerful to be overthrown should be ending.

In the Middle East subtle national differences in demographics, resources and systems of governance will mean events will take on uniquely local flavors in each country. The political dynamics of the Arab states are nuanced and varied and each will react to events in Egypt, Lebanon and Tunisia in different ways. That said, we can categorize the region's nations in a way that helps us determine which may be the most problematic.

Counter-intuitively with a small number of exceptions, problematic consequences are less likely in the region's monarchies than in the republics. This is true for a number of reasons. First, beginning about 15 years ago, the region's monarchies, mostly young kings who had been educated abroad, all to one degree or another embarked on efforts to begin to modernize their countries economically and politically.

In the Gulf, this effort began with political changes in Oman in the 1990s and spread to Bahrain and Qatar in the last decade. In Jordan, King Hussein began reforms which his son, King Abdullah II has furthered, such as higher quality legislative elections, albeit with occasional backtracking. A similar path has been followed in Morocco, where King Mohammed VI has promoted openings in a political system that had been closely regulated by his father and his father's court.

A second reason we are less likely to see consequences in monarchies is that they all to one degree or another project greater legitimacy by virtue of their hereditary (often tribal) lineage. In combination with the nascent liberalization, this enables them to deflect economic and political complaints to the new governing institutions they initiated. We are seeing this today in both Jordan and Kuwait, where the object of protesters' ire is the prime minister and the government.

In Jordan, on January 16, more than 3,000 gathered outside parliament in the capital city of Amman to protest the regime's economic policies. "Jordan is not only for the rich. Bread is a red line. Beware of our starvation and fury," read one of the protester's signs. At the time, then Prime Minister Samir Rifai's government, which the protesters were calling on to resign, had already announced a $225 million package of additional subsidies to basic goods, such as sugar and rice. One difference between demonstrations in Jordan versus Tunisia and Egypt thus far is that Jordanian demands have largely focused on economic and quality of life issues and demands for change have been directed towards replacing the Rifai government, as opposed to calling into question King Abdullah II's legitimacy or that of the Hashemite Monarchy. Jordan's King Abdullah took swift action February 2 to ask Dr. Marouf Bakhit, to form a new government. Changing governments is a routine response to popular discontent in the Kingdom with the current government having lasted only a few months since Jordan's November 2010 parliamentary elections. A key question now is whether Jordanians who have taken to the streets before the announcement to protest food prices and other economic grievances will accept the 64-year-old Bakhit, who has already served as prime minister once, as representative of a change.

In Kuwait, calls for protests are growing to address issues of parliamentary inaction, corruption and the recent death of a man in police custody. As in other parts of the Middle East, a tech-savvy youth group is in the vanguard of those calling for government changes, but unlike Egypt and Tunisia, poverty is not an issue in Kuwait. The Kuwaiti government recently announced a $3,500 payment to each of the country's citizens in an apparent attempt to settle the disgruntlement.

The obvious and perhaps most consequential exception to this general rule regarding the stability of the region's monarchies is Saudi Arabia, where reform has been glacial, and in most analyses is dependent on a monarch who is not young.

It will be important for the region's monarchies to be able to show continued if not rapid progress in opening up their political and economic systems. It is worrisome, for example, that some Gulf countries have slowed or rolled back reforms the last few years; in such cases, the royal families could put themselves out in front and become more directly the object of ire.

It is the region's republics that will be most affected by recent events in the region. The region's republics are run by men who, at best, have rigged elections and now have decreasingly credible claims to leadership. The fate of these leaders is more directly dependent on performance, which in most countries has been sorely lacking; leaders of the region's republics have for decades stalled economic and political reforms.

We have already seen demonstrations in Yemen, a country run not unlike Egypt, but with less stability and a serious Al Qaeda element. My colleagues at the National Democratic Institute (NDI) have, for example, worked valiantly to help open Yemen's political system; the difficulties they encountered were covered in a Pulitzer Prize winning *Washington Post* series in 2005. More recently, NDI has had some success in trying to improve relations between President Saleh and the country's political opposition, but general dissatisfaction with the government has nonetheless led to the region's third largest protests. President Saleh has offered reassurances that neither he nor his son would run for president in 2013.

Syria's leader, who inherited his presidency from his father made early promises of economic and political reform, but most Syrians see little difference. Syria's political situation resembles that of Tunisia, with a pervasive security apparatus, but Syria lacks the economic reforms that enabled Ben Ali to last for so long.

In the Maghreb, Algeria recently made a long overdue decision moved by protests elsewhere in the region to end its 19-year old state of emergency. It now faces a challenge in handling a planned opposition protest on February 12. Algeria faces many of the same economic issues as Egypt, though its political system is slightly more liberal. The U.S. opening to Libya based on that country's ending its weapons of mass destruction program has had no effect on the country's idiosyncratic political and economic system.

Other than Iraq, which was occupied by the United States, and the Palestinian Territories, the only Arab republic to implement modernizing reforms was, ironically, Tunisia. Under both Presidents Bouguiba and Ben Ali, Tunisia had the freest situation for women in the Arab world. The country had also undertaken impressive economic reforms, and visitors to Tunis remarked in the absence of poverty so evident in other Arab countries. Those reforms, however, generally benefitted large metropolitan areas along the coast, and were less evident in smaller towns and rural areas in the interior. Most important structurally, the country's social and economic reforms had not been followed up with political modernization; Tunisia was one of the most politically repressive countries in the Arab world with a pervasive security apparatus that rivaled some of the world's toughest dictatorships.

Lack of political accountability also helped enable what became wide scale corruption, including by the President's relatives, most notably his second wife (who bore his first male child) and in-laws. Tunisia's economy was not immune to the worldwide recession, with increasing unemployment and underemployment. In the end, the authoritarian political system was evidently incapable of responding to the increasing economic hardship of ordinary Tunisians. Some have characterized recent events as a "Facebook Revolution" by unemployed youth. Indeed Facebook has played an important information sharing role, but this is an appealing but superficial analysis. It was in fact dissident elements of the only parallel non-security organization in Tunisia, the official Labor Union, UGTT in French, that initially in rural areas and small towns began the revolution. As the rebellious demonstrations spread and eventually arrived to Tunis, protests were joined by young Tunisians who used modern technology to further the rebellion and tell the outside world what was happening.

Leaders who draw the wrong lesson from the Tunisian Republic's economic modernization – in pointing to the fact that it was the first to have a modern revolution – do so at their own peril.

I will defer to those better qualified than me to judge the consequences of recent events for Israel. At last weekend's Munich Security Conference, Uzi Arad, Israel's National Security Advisor stated that his country is "hoping for the best but preparing for the worst in Egypt," and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said Egypt could experience a revolution with the same conclusion as Iran's with extremists representing a "tremendous threat." Clearly, Israel which had regarded its security threatened more by the likes of Iran than by countries with which it shares borders will have to recalculate as a result of Hezbollah's power play to control the Lebanese government, uncertainty about Egypt's future path, and the prospect of further regional instability. For example, such uncertainty makes it less likely, in my opinion, that Israel will make compromises to reach a peace settlement with the Palestinians. Our closest ally in the region will require much reassurance and support from Washington.

IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

I will leave it to others to comment on the strategic implications for the U.S. of events in the region. This includes such issues as basing forces in places like Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, our allies to oil in the Persian Gulf and our system of alliances throughout the Middle East.

When I testified last June before the Committee, I noted that the Administration had not yet begun to implement a strategy to advance democracy abroad, because it had no strategy. Since that time, the beginnings of a strategy has been rolled out, by Secretary Clinton before the Community of Democracies' meeting in Krakow, Poland and by President Barack Obama at last fall's United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) meeting in New York. The Administration is focusing democracy work on support of indigenous civil society organizations working to achieve change from the bottom up. Closely tied to this policy focus is the Administration's emphasis on the use of technology to improve access to information. Secretary Clinton deserves great credit for conceiving and enunciating a policy that can help advance democracy abroad. I would commend to you her two most recent speeches on democracy in the Middle East. The

first was a prescient set of remarks in Doha in January, and the second speech, at last weekend's Munich security conference, in which Secretary Clinton talked about a "perfect storm" of diminishing resources, increasingly sophisticated technology, and the region's youth bulge.

Despite strong pronouncements by the President and Secretary, implementation of the policy lags. In Egypt, for example, the Administration had responded to the building pressure among average Egyptians not with increased support to civil society organizations now on the front lines of protest but instead agreed to the Mubarak government's demands for first sign-off on all U.S. funded democracy assistance delivered through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). This obviously precludes programmatic support to the demonstrators you are seeing today in Cairo's Liberation Square, leaving Egyptian non-governmental organizations (NGOs), most of which represent moderate, secular interests committed to gradual reform, largely isolated and on their own. We have allowed the Egyptian government through its undermining of moderate and secular political opposition, NGOs and activists to actively promote a dynamic for decades that makes the U.S. "choose" between Mubarak's National Democratic Party (NDP) and the Muslim Brotherhood, with nothing in-between. This turns out to have been a false choice, as witnessed by the large number of young activists and average Egyptians presently in Liberation Square. In diplomatic terms, the United States has not worked consistently or vocally enough in our bilateral relationship with Egypt to create a political and civic culture where optimal choices are available in a time of crisis.

In the case of both Jordan and Lebanon, U.S. democracy assistance exhibits many of the same failings witnessed in Egypt, with a consistent and long-term approach sorely lacking. IRI and our sister organization the National Democratic Institute constantly struggle to convince USAID and U.S. Department of State officials of the value of maintaining program components to assist Jordan's fledgling political parties. IRI receives minimal financial support to assist these parties amid a huge bilateral assistance program extended to this strategic U.S. ally. In Lebanon, IRI's political parties program which targeted parties in the March 14 coalition was cut short by the Middle East Partnership Initiative, leaving no assistance since last summer to Lebanese parties that provide the country's only counterbalance to Hezbollah.

Failure to cultivate the "next generation" of democratic leaders in an authoritarian country is not an affliction solely of the Obama Administration. I was constantly frustrated while in the George W. Bush Administration at the active disinterest in working with and fostering the development of political parties in Pakistan after 9/11. It was not until the Musharraf government began to crumble six years later that U.S. policymakers scrambled to determine who might succeed him and establish relations with figures they thought would help advance American interests. But in an administration that actively promoted democracy assistance worldwide, this case was notable as an exception. In Ukraine, Georgia and Kyrgyzstan, for example, the Bush Administration assiduously cultivated and aided the next generation of leaders, resulting in democratic – and, because of our efforts, pro-American – figures replacing authoritarians.

The Obama Administration, just two years old, has faced this issue before. In Kyrgyzstan last April, as the increasingly authoritarian government crumbled, the U.S. had no relations with the opposition. Figures in the new government complained that the U.S. Embassy had refused to meet some of them for months or years. As a consequence, in the aftermath of the revolution,

Washington feared that the new government would oust the United States from Manas Air Base (crucial for our Afghanistan operations). Fortunately, the new government was persuaded to approach the issue in a constructive manner.

Realists are noted for valuing stability in our relations abroad, even if that means ignoring how a ruler governs his state. In the aftermath of Iraq, that approach gained greater appeal. Unfortunately, being so closely tied to authoritarians does not serve U.S. interests when the authoritarians fall from power and a political vacuum ensues. It is important, when we necessarily have relations with authoritarian governments, to plan for the day when they may no longer be in power, and to cultivate and assist those who may replace them. We must also supplement our focus on personalities by working to build institutions that will make future transitions less difficult. This is a realistic approach – a type of insurance – to safeguarding U.S. interests in the long term.

At this crucial time when the Middle East appears to be entering a period of transition, the United States must strongly and consistently support popular demands for transparency, accountability and freedom. We must have a presence in these countries to help build democratic institutions and provide an enabling environment for political parties and civil society to organize and prepare to take part in credible elections. We must make a long-term commitment to stay and help young democracies and their leaders develop the capacity to govern effectively. And we have to be willing to support fragile young democracies when they are threatened by powerful neighbors.

Much has been made of the consequences of recent events in the Middle East for the rest of the region. We would be remiss if we did not look further afield. What happened in Tunisia – where economic modernization that mainly benefitted metropolitan areas was accompanied by political repression and worsening corruption – may hold clues to the future of nations with similar situations in other regions, such as Kazakhstan or China, and less well run autocracies, such as Azerbaijan and Venezuela. It is worth remembering that events in Tunisia started with citizens protesting the lack of justice, dignity and respect by the regime and not as a revolution for democracy. It is this sense of injustice that drove protests into calls for wholesale change of the political system.

Though slow to start for reasons I outlined in my testimony last June, senior Obama Administration officials have given a series of increasingly positive, commendable speeches in support of helping those who wish to advance democracy abroad. Having served in two administrations, however, I am acutely aware that speeches by a President or Secretary of State are just the beginning of a policy. The words in a speech must be implemented at the working level through day-to-day diplomacy and assistance programs. To date, this remains a challenge for the Obama Administration. The words of the President and Secretary of State must be translated into action if we are to avoid future political vacuums as authoritarian regimes inevitably crumble in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Craner. Thank you. Pleased to yield to Mr. Satloff. For 5 minutes.

STATEMENT OF ROBERT SATLOFF, PH.D., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE FOR NEAR EAST POLICY

Mr. SATLOFF. Madam Chairman, thank you for the opportunity today. Yours has been a principled voice in support of democracy in Egypt and abroad, and I know that the people in Egypt and American interests are better for it. Also, Mr. Berman, I would like to congratulate you for your stalwart support for change and reform. I had the privilege of escorting Mr. Berman to the home of a prominent dissident in Cairo several years ago, and I know that had tremors throughout the regime. And if I may, would like to congratulate my hometown neighbor, Mr. Cicilline, on his election on joining this committee.

To note the obvious, the events in Egypt have enormous implications for America's interests and role in the Middle East. For now a sober assessment for the Egyptian situation leads one to conclude that it is neither the disaster some fear nor the dawn of a new day that some hope. That story is not yet written. We can affect it only on the margins; it is of course the Egyptian people's decision to affect it most of all.

In its handling of specifics of the Egypt crisis, my assessment is that President Obama and his advisers have generally adopted a sound approach. This is of course an evolving situation. Still the administration recognized early on that it was neither wise nor possible for the United States to back regime suppression of democracy protestors and that it did not serve U.S. interests to have its relationship with Egypt personalized by identification with an unflagging support for President Mubarak. Instead the administration correctly supported the idea of change and the democratic spirit at the heart of the protests while operating on the basis of the not unreasonable assessment that the Egyptian military was and perhaps remains the key to resolving a national crisis that pit millions of protesters against an increasingly isolated and stubborn President. Hence, the administration's belief, a rational belief but still unproven on the ground, that the military could be the agent of positive change. As I said, that change has not yet happened.

For all the drama of the past 2 weeks, the regime has so far acceded to no major substantive or irrevocable change. Indeed, in some areas, the appointment of military men as Vice President and Prime Minister without clear and irrevocable decisions on the emergency law or other major changes in the Egyptian political system, there has been regression.

Every day that passes in which the military does not definitively break from President Mubarak implicates them with the regime, which is bad for our interests, and every day that passes without that break further erodes an already weakened U.S. regional image. If the new leadership does show itself to be serious about lifting the emergency law, releasing prisoners and implementing constitutional, legal and administrative changes, this may suffice to launch Egypt on the path of orderly, peaceful, democratic reform. In this context I support the maintenance of U.S. aid and align myself with Mr. Berman's comment earlier.

However, in my view United States needs to avoid being in the worst of possible situations; namely, a situation in which it is perceived to have broken with President Mubarak, which is what most of our allies fear is the case. But then to have President Mubarak still survive in the face of this only erodes the image of U.S. influence. Neither feared nor respected nor loved is not a healthy situation for American interests.

As we approach the transitional period, I do believe deep concern should be expressed about the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood is not, as some suggest, simply an Egyptian version of the March of Dimes—that is, a social welfare organization whose goals are fundamentally humanitarian; it is a political organization that seeks to reorder Egyptian society in larger Muslim societies in an Islamist fashion. The Brotherhood will exploit whatever opportunities it is presented with. It has renounced its most ambiguous goals only as a result of regime compulsion, not by free choice.

Therefore, we should express extreme caution in advocating for specific reforms that could advantage the Brotherhood at the expense of non-Islamist political parties. It would run counter to U.S. interests for the United States to advocate, for example, in favor of constitutional amendments to lift the prohibition of parties based on religion. Should Egyptians opt for such a change, that is their choice, but it is not in our interest to advance those parties at the expense of liberal or anti-Islamist parties.

Two very specific ideas in the meantime: I urge you to discuss with the administration the idea of redirecting an appropriate sum to humanitarian and medical assistance to assist the thousands of Egyptians that have been hurt, injured, or suffered as a result of this oppression of the protests. And second, I hope that the administration is working closely with NDI and IRI on planning for massive engagement during the transition process.

Madam Chairman, I have a series of telegraphic prescriptions on regional issues that are in my written testimony about strengthening partnerships, about promoting sustained efforts of reform, about directing the winds of change elsewhere, and they are in the testimony for your review.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Satloff follows:]

Testimony prepared for delivery to the
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"Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East"

By Dr. Robert Satloff
Executive Director, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Madame Chairman,

Events of the past two weeks have constituted an earthquake in terms of Arab political dynamics, the pursuit of security and peace in the Arab-Israeli arena, and the campaign to promote democratic reform in the broader Middle East. As an American, one could not but be moved by the courage and determination of the thousands of protestors yearning for peaceful, democratic change. And as an American, one could not but be concerned that this hopeful moment may -- as has been the case with previous hopeful moments in Lebanon and Iran -- give way to a darker era. I am grateful for the opportunity to offer some brief comments on the Egyptian and wider Middle Eastern situations.

As the situation in Egypt continues to unfold, U.S. policy has evolved with breathtaking speed, from Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's statement that the Mubarak regime was "stable" to President Obama's statement that Egypt's transition needs to begin "now." This is not only the most serious foreign policy challenge to this U.S. administration, but one that was almost surely not foreseen, in any operational sense. The swift demise of Hosni Mubarak's presidency, along with the virtual disappearance of the ruling National Democratic Party and the potential fall of a regime that has been a pillar of U.S. standing in the Middle East for thirty-five years, was not on the list of "likely surprises" just days ago.

To note the obvious, the events in Egypt have enormous implications for America's interests and role in the Middle East. Even before this week's events, the United States was on a losing streak: Lebanon went from Hariri to Hizballah, Syria broke out from years of U.S.-imposed isolation, Muqtada al-Sadr returned to political prominence in Iraq; and the Arab-Israeli "peace process" -- which President Obama proclaimed a top priority -- has remained dismally stuck in neutral for two years. The administration's few victories, such as lining up relatively broad support for sanctions on Iran to compel a change in its nuclear program, do not stack up against this string of setbacks; however successful that effort has been, it has been only a tactical success, as there so far seems to

have been little strategic progress in convincing Iran to change its behavior on the nuclear file. While the crisis in Egypt may eventually redound to the advantage of U.S. interests, the near-term impact is surely to exacerbate the series of body blows to U.S. influence in the broader Middle East.

For now, a sober assessment of the Egypt situation leads one to conclude that it is neither the disaster some fear nor the dawn of a new day that some hope. That story is not yet written; both outcomes are possible. On the plus side, the protests have been largely anti-Mubarak but not anti-America or anti-peace. Of course, that could change. And on the negative side, the absence of opposition leadership could open avenues for more radical elements to fill the void.

In its handling of the specifics of the Egypt crisis, my assessment is that President Obama and his advisors have generally adopted a sound approach. This is an evolving situation, the course of which the United States is able to affect only on the margins. Still, the administration has adopted a policy that can only be described as bold -- and risky. They recognized early on that it was neither wise nor possible for the U.S to back regime suppression of the democracy protestors and that it did not serve U.S. interests to have its relationship with Egypt personalized by identification with and unflagging support for President Mubarak. Instead, the administration has correctly supported the idea of change and the democratic spirit at the heart of the protests, while operating on the basis of the not unreasonable assessment that the Egyptian military was (and perhaps remains) the key to resolving a national crisis that pit millions of pro-democracy protesters against an increasingly isolated and stubborn president. Hence, the administration's belief -- rational but still unproven by events on the ground -- that the military could be the agent for positive change.

Should Mubarak Stay or Go?

At times, the administration appears to have answered this question with thundering clarity - yes, President Mubarak needs to vacate his office. At other times, the administration has projected ambiguity - no, President Mubarak is essential for a peaceful and orderly transition. While it seems clear that the administration harbors no illusions that President Mubarak can survive the current protests and that transition has both personal as well as constitutional aspects to it, this ambiguity has not advanced U.S. interests. For Middle Easterners, the imagery of Presidents Mubarak and Obama appearing on television just moments after each other on February 1 -- one saying "September" and the other saying "now" -- projected a clear message. The result is that every day Mubarak stays in office is a rebuke to Obama. Indeed, Mubarak may decide to stay a bit longer just to make the point that Obama could not push him out.

What Is the Military's Role?

This is the key variable in the equation. At the moment, the military is undergoing a tug-of-war for its soul. On the one hand, Mubarak has named a triumvirate of leaders from various services -- intelligence, army, air force -- to bring them and the armed forces closer to him and make them full partners in the effort to extend his rule. On the other hand, the military has generally refused to fire on citizens, a fact reflected in Obama's

heady compliments on last week. In effect, Mubarak and Obama are each appealing to the military, one asking them "to stay the course" and the other effectively urging them "to do the right thing" by sidelining the president and beginning the transition. Military leaders found themselves in a bind, which was reflected in the fact that they sometimes took actions which signaled firm support of Mubarak while at other times they took actions that reflected distancing from the president. In this tug of war, the forces arrayed against change are showing resourcefulness, stamina and creativity. Every day that passes in which the military does not definitively break from Mubarak implicates them with the regime. And every day that passes without that definitive break further erodes an already weakened U.S. regional image.

Should the United States Suspend Aid?

Some have argued for suspending all U.S. aid to Egypt immediately. Although their objective is understandable, their prescription is incorrect. Again, the most likely agent of peaceful change at the moment -- the institution most likely to trigger transition -- is the military. The United States should therefore remain in contact with this institution in order to influence it, to the extent possible. The idea that Washington gains influence by cutting off assistance simply does not translate into Arabic. The administration is correct to maintain its current posture, continuing economic and military assistance to Egypt until it has greater clarity on the ground. A time may come, if the military decides fully to side with Mubarak or shoot protesters, when Washington can decide whether to suspend aid, but for now it should maintain the limited leverage and influence it has. At the same time, it is important for the Egyptian military leaders to hear directly from their U.S. counterparts, as well as from U.S. diplomatic representatives and political leaders, precisely how their actions (and their inaction) could affect U.S. security assistance.

What Does Transition Mean in Practice?

Transition surely means something different to new Egyptian vice president Omar Suleiman than it does to opposition figures such as Mohamed ElBaradei or the head of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). In my view, it is difficult to envision a nonregime figure -- that is, someone who is neither a member of the national security establishment nor a proregime public figure (e.g., Arab League secretary-general Amr Mousa) -- emerging as a transitional leader. Most likely, such a leader will come from the triumvirate of military figures Mubarak has named. Once a decision is finally made, many oppositionists may in fact breathe a sigh of relief after so much attention has been focused on the question of whether Mubarak will step down. If the new leadership shows itself to be serious about lifting the emergency law, releasing political prisoners, and implementing constitutional, legal, and administrative changes to permit free and fair elections, this may suffice to launch Egypt on a path of orderly, peaceful, democratic reform.

As we approach the transitional period, I believe deep concern about the Muslim Brotherhood's potential emergence as a major player and even power-broker is warranted. The Brotherhood is not, as some suggest, simply an Egyptian version of the March of Dimes – that is, a social welfare organization whose goals are fundamentally humanitarian. On the contrary, the Brotherhood is a fundamentally political organization

that seeks to reorder Egyptian (and broader Muslim) society in an Islamist fashion. Tactically, the organization will exploit whatever opportunities it is offered; it has renounced its most ambitious goals and violent means only as a result of regime compulsion, not by free choice. Extreme caution in advocating for reforms that could advantage the Brotherhood at the expense of non-Islamist political parties, groups and movement is warranted. At the same time, the United States should not operate under the assumption that the Brotherhood's ascension to power is inevitable, given the country's broad range of political alternatives. In fact, such an assumption is very dangerous and could itself lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy.

U.S. interests and U.S. policy

Broadly speaking, U.S. interests are best served by supporting a transition to an Egyptian government that:

- shows, through action, its commitment to the universal freedoms of speech, assembly, thought, and religion, and to a free press; that encourages religious liberty and both practices and enforces religious tolerance for all minorities; that supports the rights of people to communicate freely, including through the internet, without interference; and that combats extremism in all its forms, including those based on religion;
- represents, through democratic norms and practices (including free and fair elections for president and parliament), the legitimate political, economic, and social aspirations of its people and that endeavors, in all practicable ways, to meet them;
- respects the rule of law and the institutions of justice; recognizes the vital importance of an independent judiciary; and fights corruption at all levels of government;
- is committed to fulfill its international obligations, including (but not limited to) freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal; peace with Israel and the expansion of peace throughout the region; the fight against extremism and terrorism; peaceful resolution of the Sudan conflict (including recognition of partition); and all other treaty obligations and duties incumbent upon a peace-loving member of the United Nations;
- affirms its bilateral partnership with the United States to advance security and peace in the Middle East, Africa, and the Mediterranean.

This is the Egypt that merits full U.S. political support and financial assistance, including both economic and military aid. Washington should send to the Egyptian leadership and people a clear message that it stands ready to provide such aid to a government that can endorse these principles and work toward their implementation in practice.

At the same, time, it is important for Egyptians to know the sort of government that would not merit U.S. support: a government that suppresses popular protest or resorts to violence against its citizens; a government that rejects the legitimate calls of its people for redress of grievances; a government whose promises of political reform consistently prove hollow; a government that presides over a regime of state-sponsored religious

intolerance or state-complicit violence against religious minorities; a government that flouts Egypt's international commitments.

These principles should serve as the foundation of Washington's policy toward the uncertain situation in Egypt. They reflect core U.S. interests in the bilateral relationship and employ "positive conditionality" by linking assistance to a timetable for political reform and leadership transition. This approach is the best way to use American assets to affect the decisionmaking of those wielding authority in Cairo and facilitate a successful, orderly and peaceful transition.

In this context, the United States should consult with the leadership in Cairo on ways to chart a transition to a government that would meet these goals and objectives. The willingness of Egypt's current leaders to endorse these principles and to outline a timetable for their implementation should determine whether the United States is able to continue providing economic and military support to Egypt. This includes a schedule for the constitutional, legal, and administrative changes needed to ensure free and fair presidential and parliamentary elections, including a transition to new leadership.

In this regard, it would run counter to U.S. interests for the United States to advocate in favor of a constitutional amendment to lift the prohibition on parties based on religion; should Egyptians opt for such a change, this is their right but the U.S. has no interest in advancing the prospects of the Muslim Brotherhood at the expense of liberal and democratic parties who are our natural partners. And during that process of transition, the administration should continuously monitor the Egyptian leadership's commitment to the rule of law, respect for universal freedoms, and protection of religious minorities as critical tests of its sincerity and responsibility.

In the meantime, the Obama administration should consider, with Congressional approval, re-directing an appropriate sum to humanitarian and medical assistance to aid both the thousands of Egyptians wounded in the recent protests and to assist Egypt in cushioning the human cost of the protests on the Egyptian people. Such aid and assistance should be funneled through non-governmental organizations, many of which have solid track records in providing and distributing aid.

In addition, the Administration should immediately engage with the relevant democracy promotion organizations, including NDI and IRI, to assist Egyptians with their transition to democracy. This includes providing technical assistance to the government, to the independent election commission, as well as likely election monitors (including Egypt's respected judiciary) and providing campaign and election training and support to all those Egyptian candidates and parties willing to affirm the main elements of the statement of policy noted above.

As for concerns about Egypt's regional posture, some changes are surely in order. America's Egyptian pillar is going through profound shock, the outcome of which is decidely uncertain. Other Arab states have played an important role in support of U.S. regional interests -- the role Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have played in Afghanistan and Iraq come to mind -- but neither compares with the image of partnership with the United States projected more or less consistently by Egypt for more than three decades. While it is true that Egypt's regional influence has waned in recent years, and while it is true that there are important issues on which Egyptian partnership was found

wanting, the swift demise of a longtime ally cannot but exacerbate the already tarnished image of U.S. regional influence. This situation can be salvaged through the establishment of a new government in Egypt that both has popular support and sees value in continued strategic partnership with the United States -- a difficult but not impossible configuration. But we should recognize that will take considerable time.

In the meantime, the winds of change that first began to blow in Tunis and turned into a tornado in Cairo will have an impact elsewhere in the region. It is a mistake, however, to view the Middle East as a series of dominoes waiting to fall. The domestic context in each country is the dominant factor determining the stability or instability of a particular regime and each country's situation is quite different from the next.

Without entering into a detailed discussion of each country, I offer a series of thematic prescriptions for U.S. regional policy:

- **Strengthen partnerships:** The demise of America's Egyptian pillar, at least for the foreseeable future, underscores the importance of strengthening our other partnerships.
    - The U.S.-Israel relationship is at the top of the list, because of the shock to Israel's national security structure that just occurred and because of the critical role that U.S.-Israel relations play in the advance of U.S. security interests throughout the region. Leaders of our two countries should commence immediate consultations on ways to strengthen the strategic partnership between these two democratic allies, both in substance and in perception.
    - U.S.-Gulf partnerships are critical. The United States should find various ways to project its continuing commitment to the security and stability of the Gulf and to the Arab states of the region, including Iraq. This includes (but is not limited to) projection of military power, high-level visits, and bilateral and regional discussions on security issues.
    - Washington should also find ways, perhaps in concert with Arab oil producers, to strengthen the Jordanian government, which – through King Abdullah's appointment of a new government -- has renewed its commitment to the Jordanian people to advance the pace of political reform and ease the economic dislocations from which Jordan is currently suffering.

- **Promote a sustained and substantive process of reform:** However courageous the people of Egypt have shown themselves to be in the face of a government that rejected repeated pleas for political reform, incremental and orderly change remains the preferred path to political change. In that regard, the Egyptian and Tunisian cases now provide Washington with a new opportunity to engage Arab leaders and Arab peoples on ways to build more democratic, representative, responsive and legitimate political systems, free of corruption and with respect for individual political rights. High-level officials should urgently take these two messages – a desire to strengthen partnerships and a desire to work cooperatively now on reform – to regional capitals. Especially vulnerable in this regard are

several of the region's republics which, unlike the monarchies, have actually promised democracy and failed to deliver. (The monarchies have set the bar lower in terms of political commitments and, while they fall short, they generally can rely on other forms of legitimacy and authenticity than the republics.) On the reform agenda, Washington should give high priority to Tunisia, where it is in U.S. interest to see a model of secular democratic reform succeed, and the Palestinian Authority-ruled West Bank, where the current circumstances may make possible a local election that could be an important legitimizing tool for the current PA leadership.

- **Direct winds of change toward repressive regimes:** The contrast in the Obama administration's approach to the pro-democracy movement in Iran/June 2009 and in Egypt/January 2011 is striking. As we move forward, U.S. policy should be at least as supportive of proponents of peaceful democratic change in states whose governments have adopted policies inimical to our interests as we have been in states whose governments have aligned themselves with our interests. In practice, this means the use of U.S. strategic communications, public diplomacy and other tangible assets to assist and support the idea of democratic change in Iran and Syria and the courageous people willing to fight for that goal.

- **Don't let Iran benefit from our distraction:** The simple fact that senior U.S. officials, from the President on down, were fixated on Egypt over the past two weeks meant that they were not focused on the urgent need to compel Iran to change policy on its nuclear program. When this reality is combined with statements by various U.S. and allied officials that the timeline for Iranian nuclear progress has been pushed back, it would not be surprising for Iranians to conclude that the United States is either distracted or complacent in its campaign to force a change in Iranian nuclear policy. That is a dangerous situation. Vigilance is in order. We should not rule out the idea that Iran may misread the situation and opt to seek a speedier breakout, or to expand its capabilities in new and dangerous ways, or attempt to exert its influence elsewhere in the region by pursuing some new form of provocative behavior. There may even be some in Tehran who believe the moment ripe for deploying fifth-columnists and political saboteurs with the goal of toppling regimes they may consider weak and unstable.

- **Adopt a more sober and realistic approach to Israeli-Palestinian peace:** Recent events in Tunisia, Egypt, Jordan and elsewhere show that:
    - the absence of progress toward Israeli-Palestinian peace appears not to have been a factor in the popular unrest;
    - Israeli security fears about the stability and security of the parties to whom it makes irrevocable concessions are neither inflated nor based on unfathomable worst-case scenarios.

In this context, the Obama Administration should explore whether these two factors have changed the political calculus on the part of the Palestinian Authority leadership to the extent that they are now willing to engage in substantive negotiations now. Ideas that may have been unacceptable to Palestinians in the past – ranging from Israeli demands for long-term security presence in the Jordan Valley to incrementalist or partial arrangements, short of a full peace agreement – may today be ready for negotiation.

Even without a chance in approach by the PA leadership, the Obama administration should focus more attention on the need for substantive investment in the institution-building now underway in the West Bank. This bottom-up process is the disadvantaged step-child of the more high-profile effort to promote top-down diplomatic success. The appointment of a senior official with specific responsibility for the institution-building process would be a step in the right direction.

At the same time, U.S. officials should recognize that Israeli leaders are quite understandably shaken at the events in Cairo and are likely to await until there is clarity on the Egyptian political scene to assess the impact of changes there on items that affect Israeli security (e.g., relations with Hamas, security in Sinai, Gaza border security, transit of natural gas to Israel, cooperation in counter-terrorism). Working with Israel to address those new concerns should be a top priority.

In this environment, it would be a mistake for the Administration to believe that now is a propitious moment for grand peace plans or for made-in-America bridging proposals. Given the seismic change on Israel's southern frontier, such a U.S. approach would only confirm the worst fears of Israeli leaders and Israeli public opinion about U.S. understanding of their security predicament. However, the U.S. would be wise to explore the possibility of progress on the Arab-Israeli front, based on the idea that the changed regional landscape may make once "unacceptable" ideas more palatable to the Palestinians and/or on the idea that building the foundation of peace in a bottom-up process may eventually make the top-down diplomacy more amenable to breakthrough.

The situation in Lebanon: Given that this hearing has reserved special time for review of the situation in Lebanon, a few specific comments are in order:

The appointment of a Hizballah-nominated prime minister in Lebanon is a serious blow for U.S. interests. Just five years ago, after the assassination of former Prime Minister Hariri, the Lebanese people led the way in popular protest in the Middle East and forced Syrian troops to end their decades-old occupation of the country. This was a great victory for U.S. interests and the cause of freedom and democracy in the Middle East. Today, the situation has been reversed. The radical Shiite organization Hizbollah – backed by Iran and Syria – has turned the tables on the coalition of moderate, pro-West forces, employing intimidation and fear as its principal weapons. On Israel's northern border, as now on Israel's southern border, uncertainty reigns.

For the United States, there are near-term decisions to be made about U.S. relations with the new government in Lebanon. The wisest route should be for the action or inaction of the Lebanese government to guide these decisions. Lebanon has responsibilities to bear under the UN Security Council resolution that governs the 2006 war ceasefire as well as the resolution that governs the mandate and operations of the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. Failure to fulfill obligations under these and other relevant resolutions should trigger consideration by the Obama administration of punitive measures, including coordination with members of the Security Council on steps against the government of Lebanon and a review of our military assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces. Through it all, Washington should keep its eye on the long-term goal of sustaining and developing indigenous forces that reject the foreign domination and external influence of Syria and Iran, that oppose Hizbollah's reckless policy of holding the Lebanese population hostage to its phantom "resistance" against Israel, and that want instead to build a free, democratic and independent Lebanon.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. We will read those. Thank you, Dr. Satloff. And thank you to all of our witnesses for excellent testimony.

I would like to yield my 5 minutes of questioning to freshman Congresswoman Renee Ellmers of North Carolina. She is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Dr. Satloff, in your writing today, one of your issues that you wrote about is that our U.S. policy toward Iran has only been a tactical success as there so far seems to have been little strategic progress in convincing Iran to change its behavior in the nuclear file.

How have these recent events in Egypt, Lebanon, and elsewhere throughout the region altered Tehran's strategic calculus and cost-benefit analysis? Please elaborate because we have got to be watching everything, and this is a big concern.

Mr. SATLOFF. Congresswoman, I couldn't agree with you more. I fear that the leaders of Iran are misreading our distraction on Egypt and are taking this as a moment of opportunity. I fear that they are seeing change in Lebanon, the events in Gaza, a serious emergence from isolation, and now the events in Egypt, I fear they are reading this as a series of body blows to U.S. interests and that they may be feeling that they are on a roll.

I think we should be very careful to keep our eyes vigilant about efforts by Iranians to use fifth columnists against other American allies in the gulf and elsewhere, and maybe a reconsideration by Iran of the pace of its nuclear program, believing that perhaps we are distracted elsewhere.

Now, on our side we do have assets. The administration, in my view, lost a great opportunity with the popular protests in Iran in the summer of 2009. And if you compare the Obama administration approach the summer of 2009 in Iran and January, 2011, in Egypt, there is a stark contrast. I concur with my colleague, Mr. Abrams, that we should do our best to blow the winds of change to Tehran and Damascus. Far be it from us that we should be more supportive of democracy in countries that have historically been partners with us than historically that have been adversaries. And I think there is much we can do to advance that prospect.

Mrs. ELLMERS. Thank you very much, and I yield back my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Congresswoman.

I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to our ranking member, Mr. Berman of California.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

I would like, most particularly, because you addressed one issue that Congress is appropriately and directly involved in, is this whole issue of assistance to Egypt and how to handle it and what we should be calling for and what we should be doing and what the administration should be doing. My instinctive reaction because of wanting to incentivize the military using their authority to make this transition happen—and I agree, it is not clear to me that they have made that decision—was to be careful about messing around with the military assistance right now. Mr. Satloff, you sort of came down on that side, Dr. Satloff.

Elliott, you think we should cut off both military and economic assistance—or at least the working group statement that you are part of said that. Did you include democracy promotion activities in that? But I would like to hear the two of you just develop that. You generally see this much the same way and disagree on this specific issue. I would like to hear more.

Mr. ABRAMS. My view is that we need to tell the Egyptian military very clearly, Congress needs to tell them very clearly we are not going to pay for this suppression of democracy in Egypt. I agree, I think the army may not have made up its mind yet, so now is the time to signal them, this aid is conditional.

I would agree with Rob Satloff, I wouldn't cut it off today. First I would send that message that we are watching, and it could be cut off any day if you guys do a Tiananmen Square in Cairo, or even much less than that, if you make it clear that your goal is to maintain Mubarakism without Mubarak.

Mr. SATLOFF. I would say we are in violent agreement now.

The United States doesn't have so many levers. It would seem to me a mistake to preemptively deny us leverage at a moment when perhaps that leverage could be determinative. I don't want to exaggerate the potential for this to be the case, but why we would throw away an arrow before it is absolutely apparent that the Egyptian Army has made a choice to suppress and refuse change seems to be unwise.

Mr. BERMAN. And speak to the issue of how directly the administration should address Mubarak leaving office immediately, or how would you suggest they handle that issue? Any of you? All of you.

Mr. SATLOFF. I will offer my view. Once the President, last Tuesday, offered the imagery of him appearing on television 2 hours after President Mubarak had said he was going to stay 8 months, and the President got on television saying the words "now," even though there was some ambiguity in that statement, the ambiguity did not translate into Arabic. And everyone in the Middle East saw that Mubarak said 8 months, the President said "now," and every day since then has been a victory for Mubarak.

It is not as though he needs to resign or leave the country. There are alternative constitutional arrangements that President Mubarak could take advantage of.

Mr. BERMAN. He could delegate his authority.

Mr. SATLOFF. According to the Egyptian Constitution, he could delegate his executive authority to his Vice President, which is a major constitutional decision that would send us off on a new path. That is what I would hope would be the direction in which we head.

Mr. CRANER. I think on all these issues, whether it is Mubarak leaving, what do we need to do with the aid? We need to think about what we want to see in the end, what is our goal? And the goal is decent elections with, hopefully, moderates coming out very well in those elections. Then we need to work our way back and say, What is the best way to accomplish that?

So on the issue of aid, I think that is our largest trump card. I don't think it is time to play it yet. On the issue of military, I would agree with Elliott that we need to be very, very clear on what we are expecting.

On the issue of Mubarak, I think it is fair to ask if somebody who has led the kind of fraudulent elections that we have seen repeatedly over the last 30 years in Egypt is now capable of leading an effort for a fair and free election.

Mr. BERMAN. My time is expired.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Excellent questions, Mr. Berman.

I am pleased to yield to the chair of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights, Mr. Smith of New Jersey, for 5 minutes.

Mr. SMITH. Thank you, Madam Chair. And congratulations again on your chairmanship. I look forward to serving with you and Ranking Member Berman.

Let me just begin by saying thank you to the three of you. I have known you; you are great leaders on behalf of human rights for decades.

The administration seems to find its voice on human rights and democracy, it seems to me, only when events portend radical change. A few weeks ago President Obama rolled out the red carpet for Chinese President Hu Jintao, a brutal dictator whose rise to power was initially enabled or advanced by the murder of hundreds of people in Tibet in 1989. Many of us were frustrated and profoundly disappointed. Even the Washington Post editorial said "President Obama makes Hu Jintao look good on rights" in their January 19 editorial. It was a scathing editorial.

Now that Mubarak is in trouble, this administration is making human rights demands—better late than never, but they are making them. Yet in its first year, the Obama administration cut democracy funding for Egypt by more than half. The democracy in governance total was $54.8 million in 2008; it dropped to $23.5 million in 2009; and the request for 2011 is $25 million. And the NGOs that are not registered, obviously don't even apply—a break with the Bush administration policy. As we all know, human rights groups that are not registered are usually the cutting edge in the avant-garde in terms of promoting human rights.

My question is—a day late and a dollar short, I am glad they are making statements—but will this lead to a matriculation from bad to worse, as we saw with the Shah of Iran? We all know that SAVAK was not a good group, his secret police, during the Iranian crisis. But now we have something that potentially could be profoundly worse than the Muslim Brotherhood.

Your thoughts on the Muslim Brotherhood. Are people being naive, somehow thinking that the Muslim Brotherhood will be benign and will have a nonviolent approach to politics?

Secondly, last month, Frank Wolf chaired a hearing on the Coptic Church in response to the violence which killed about 23, we think, Coptic Christians; 100 were wounded. My question is, how will the Coptic Church, about 10 percent of Egypt's population, fare going forward, especially with the potential ascension of the Muslim Brotherhood?

And finally, Israel's profound concerns about the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. I remember when President Bush kept saying we want free and fair elections, which brought in Hamas. Fattah was

certainly a corrupt organization and had terrorists in its ranks, but it went from bad to worse when there was an election.

Our fear is, I think on both sides of the aisle, that the Muslim Brotherhood's animosity toward Israel is well documented. Your views on that.

Mr. ABRAMS. Thank you.

A word on the Copts, I would just say I worry a lot about that, because as we look through the whole region, the situation of Christian communities throughout the region is very bad and worsening. On Copts, we should not glamorize how great the situation has been in Egypt. As you know, it has been impossible to build churches, to repair churches under Hosni Mubarak. There has been a lot of discrimination against Copts in his Egypt. But I think we do have to worry, in the context of the Muslim Brotherhood, about a more Islamic Egypt being even more discriminatory against them.

On the Muslim Brotherhood takeover, that is something that has to worry all of us. And I agree with Rob Satloff that I think conditions that, for example, forbid religious parties are actually potentially quite useful. But I would just say the bulwark that keeps this from being Iran is the army, and that is why I worry, as he does. Every day that the army is associated with Hosni Mubarak today in suppressing these demonstrations diminishes the legitimacy and popularity of the army. Every day they are complicit with the police and the thugs, it makes it a lot harder for them to keep the revered position they have had in Egypt, and that is a great worry.

Mr. CRANER. You talked about the elections in the Palestinian territories. Some of us would argue it was because elections didn't occur for so long—and they were repeatedly delayed—that the Palestinian Authority had ample opportunity to demonstrate how corrupt and useless it was in terms of delivering services. And that only strengthened Hamas. You have to ask yourself if over time, if change is delayed in Egypt, if that only makes the Muslim Brotherhood stronger over time. I think that is a fair question to ask.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The gentleman's time has expired.

I am pleased to yield for 5 minutes of questioning to the ranking member of the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Mr. Ackerman of New York.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

I think it is more frustrating to see you guys in so much agreement than if you were disagreeing. At least we would be able to figure out where to push or not push our own administration. It is frustrating to see that they are not moving in the same direction. That, to me, makes great common sense with what the entire panel seems to be saying.

We are not going to have a second chance to make a great impression on the people in the street who are at their most vulnerable point right now and probably a lot more malleable as to what the United States interests are and what our real intentions are here.

While I am not sure I wholly agree with what Mr. Abrams said about sending an ambassador to Syria, not sending an ambassador I guess is a message in and of itself, but when you don't send a messenger, how do you send a second message is the question?

We have messengers in Egypt, and one of the messengers that we should be using is the military. We have paid a lot of money to help in the formation of the virtues that the military seems to possess and the restraint that they have apparently been demonstrating in the streets. Should we not be more closely using that tie to have a Nixon moment to deliver a message via the military to Mr. Mubarak? Should not they be the ones that help impact? Because the longer this thing takes, the worse the position is for the United States to influence the opinions in the street.

My second question is about the Muslim Brotherhood, which I think is critical here; how we deal with that and how we help the leadership deal with that and the military. It is my view that if you over-pesticide your garden, only the weeds are going to survive. And that is what we have here as far as looking at who the leaders of the opposition are. We have killed all the flowers—he has killed all the flowers, I should say, Mubarak—and the Brotherhood is left. They are not the March of Dimes—Mr. Satloff is right—neither are they the "march of the benign," but are they the "march of demons"? How concerned should we be and how do we get the military to keep up the bulwark of the opposition to him in the formation of any new government?

Dr. Satloff.

Mr. SATLOFF. In terms of the military, I think the thrust of your comment is correct. The President, and just yesterday Secretary Gates, had very laudatory words for the military. What is unclear is whether in private our political and military leadership—Secretary Gates, Admiral Mullen, et cetera—are being as tough in private as they are being complimentary in public. In private, the Egyptian military should know very clearly what actions or inactions it takes or doesn't take would trigger the end of aid that you spoke about earlier. I don't know if that is happening. That is essential.

In terms of the Muslim Brotherhood, I think we should recognize and be vigilant about the danger, not exaggerate the danger. There is no inevitability that the Muslim Brotherhood is going to come to power in Egypt, and we can't have a self-fulfilling prophesy here; that would be a mistake. There is a huge range of non-Islamist political forces that deserve our assistance and support. And indeed, one of the things that we should be pressing for urgently is a change in the Egyptian law that prevents our direct assistance to so many important nongovernmental organizations in that country. Don't exaggerate, but also don't be naive. I think that is the right approach.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Mr. Craner.

Mr. CRANER. Egypt would not be the first military that was starting to lose, as Rob noted, is starting to lose its good reputation in a country because it was sticking too close to a dictator. This happened in Pakistan where the military, which was the most revered institution in the country, started descending in people's opinions. I think that is something we ought to remind them of. I think certainly American assistance is something we ought to remind them of. I am sure the Chinese would be happy to supply tanks and aircraft, but they are not American tanks and aircraft and tactics.

In terms of the Brotherhood, I would agree with Rob, I am afraid to say. I would agree with Rob. We need to stop presenting ourselves with the choice that Mubarak gave us and understand that there are people in the middle. This is why I personally do not favor quick elections; I think some time is needed to be able to work with those folks. But we shouldn't repeat to ourselves Mubarak's choice.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. The gentleman's time has expired.

Mr. Burton, chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURTON. Elliott, it is good seeing you again. You and I go back all the way to Central America and the problems back there in the early eighties during Reagan's administration, so it is good seeing you.

I would like to broaden the discussion just a little bit. The problems in Egypt seem to be manifesting itself in some of the other states, not to the degree that you see in Egypt, but there is concern about the Persian Gulf area, the Straits of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and what that means for the United States of America. And I am very concerned about that. We are not moving toward energy independence. Our dependency on Venezuela and the Middle East is even greater now than it has been in the past. We get about 30 percent of our energy from the Middle East and about 20 percent, or thereabouts, from Venezuela. We have got some people that don't like us very much that we are getting our oil from.

So my concern is what is likely to happen in these other countries, and whether or not there is a possibility that we could see a bottling up of the Suez Canal, the Straits of Hormuz, and the Persian Gulf, what that means to the United States. If we don't drill here in the ANWR and drill off the Continental Shelf and in the Gulf of Mexico and use some of the 300 or 400 years of natural gas and coal shale that we have while we are transitioning to these other new technologies, windmills and solar and nuclear and so forth, what is going to happen in the United States? What is your prognostication on whether or not this sort of thing could happen over there and how can we deal with that?

Right now I am sure you all know that there are some rumblings going on in the Persian Gulf States, there are some minor rumblings going on in Syria; we have already heard some minor rumblings in Jordan, as well as Egypt. And also we have our good friend, Israel, that is right in the middle of all this. And if that thing blows up, they are certainly going to defend themselves, which could be a catalyst for a major problem.

So I know this is a very broad question, but I would like to know how this affects the United States and our security, both economically and militarily.

Elliott, why don't we start with you?

Mr. ABRAMS. Thank you, Mr. Burton. Thank you for the kind words. It is great to see you again.

So far, the Suez Canal is open for business, and it is certainly in the interests of the Egyptian military to keep it open. I think if we see any sign of Iranian reactions to this, taking advantage of this, it would be timely for America's military leaders to stop talking about how catastrophic it would be if there were ever a strike

on Iran, and to start saying that if Iran closes the Straits of Hormuz, we will open them; we will open them fast, and they will pay the price. I think we should make that very, very plain to the Iranians.

I also would just say I agree with you that we have an incredible development in shale gas that gives us an opportunity to be independent of Middle Eastern oil, not tomorrow morning, but not 50 years from now either. To me it seems that we ought to be moving as fast as we can to develop that resource and make ourselves energy independent.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Craner.

Mr. CRANER. The one allied country in the Persian Gulf that I think ought to be of some concern is Bahrain, where they have rolled back a lot of the openings that they had made, where you have got a heavy Shiite population. Obviously, once you get beyond that—Qatar, Oman, et cetera, I think are going to be pretty stable. And again, it is Iran that I would worry about. I would worry a lot about Iran trying to take advantage of all these events far afield from where they are. They have got to be happy watching some of these newscasts.

Mr. SATLOFF. Just very briefly, not all rumblings are the same, not all rumblings are bad news. I would hope that we would see more rumblings in Syria and Iran. It advantages our interests. And if we could help propel the winds of change to Damascus and Tehran, that would be good.

Secondly, I do think that the situation in Jordan is different than what we have seen in Egypt and Tunisia. The Jordanians—it is a serious situation, but I don't think that it is by any means approaching the crisis point that we saw in Egypt and Tunisia. I think in general we have to caution against the concept of dominoes falling from one country to another. It is a very different situation in some of these countries.

Mr. BURTON. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Burton.

I am pleased to yield to our friend from American Samoa, Mr. Faleomavaega, for 5 minutes.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Madam Chair. Congratulations on your attainment of the chairmanship of this committee. I am looking forward to working with you and your colleagues on the other side of the aisle.

I do want to thank the gentlemen for their testimonies this morning.

It is quite obvious that there are so many undercurrents and crosscurrents now developing as far as the crisis that we are facing in Egypt at this time. Some 350 million Arabs live in this part of the world. I wanted to know how difficult the problem is now that we are confronted with it.

Would you agree that our general policy toward Egypt has been never mind about democracy as long as there is stability? And is there a sense of resentment among the Egyptians that say, Oh, now the United States wants to look for another Mubarak to continue the policy of stability, more importantly, than that of democracy—as I think our good friend, my colleague from New York, has given concern as to whether or not our Government is going to

allow the Egyptian people ultimately to make that decision for themselves and to their future. I would like your comments on that.

Mr. ABRAMS. Thank you. I think you are right. I think that except for some brief periods—2004, 2005, especially—we have basically been uninterested as a country in democracy in Egypt. We have taken—and we have exaggerated, I would also say—the benefits we get from President Mubarak, and there are a lot of Egyptians who I think do resent it. I think we could overcome that resentment if we make it clear right now that we really do hope their revolution succeeds. And I think the administration has not been clear about that. I think it has been straddling the fence. It is time for the United States to make it very clear that we think what is going on is really terrific and that we hope for nothing more than democracy in Egypt.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Craner.

Mr. CRANER. I have no question that what you just said is absolutely true. I think we do have a chance to redeem ourselves. I think if we look back at our experiences in Chile and in the Philippines under President Reagan, they provide good guides about how to move.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Mr. Satloff.

Mr. SATLOFF. Sir, over just the last week, my organization funded a poll in Egypt through the Pechter Middle East polling firm, which is the first polling data to come out of Egypt since the crisis. One of the findings is this crisis is not anti-American. It is anti-Mubarak, but it is not anti-American. That is a good sign, and that gives us a good foundation on which to move forward. I don't know if it will last, and we do have to make important decisions to ensure that it doesn't fall backward, but we have a surprisingly strong foundation on which to move forward in Egypt.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. For the past 30 years we have given Egypt well over $65 billion in assistance, and $36 billion of that went to the military to prop up Egypt's military defense forces.

Would you agree that if this crisis really comes to a boiling point where there is going to be riots and all of that, that the military definitely will have to step in and take control of the government?

Mr. SATLOFF. Sir, I think the military has already stepped in to take control of the government. We have two military Vice Presidents and a military Prime Minister and still a military President. What we hope for is a military to chart the transition and to take irrevocable decisions toward change.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. And even if we make threats toward the military, saying that we are going to cut off your funding, I am quite sure that there are going to be other sources out there that are more than willing to compensate for whatever restrictions or whatever decisions that we make, and say we are not going to fund you, they are going to find other sources.

So isn't it ultimately that this is going to be one of the most critical points where the military definitely is going to be the real power behind whatever is going to happen in the coming weeks and even months as far as Egypt's future is concerned?

Mr. ABRAMS. It will. And I think they are in charge right now. And even if we grant that they could find the money someplace

else—I am not sure, $1 billion is still a lot of money—but even if we grant that, the question is about us more than about them: Where do we stand? What do we want our money going for? What record will be compiled in this crisis created in Egypt? I think that is even more important in a sense.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I think my time is up.

Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Faleomavaega.

I now would like to yield 5 minutes to the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation, Mr. Rohrabacher of California.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Thank you very much. These witnesses have been excellent witnesses today. I thank each one of you for sharing your expertise and also for your service to our country in the past years and the service to the cause of democracy.

I would like to identify myself with this commitment to democracy as articulated by our witnesses. I do think that we could have been giving advice to the regime and to the military and perhaps forcing more democratic reform over the years. That certainly is important, not just looking forward but looking back.

However, let me just note where we are today. I find it very disturbing that there is such a contrast between the administration's muffled and restrained response to the brutal repression of demonstrators against the anti-American Mullah regime in Tehran as compared—and that is in stark contrast to the embracing of the demonstrators against a less than democratic friendly government in Egypt. I think that sends exactly the wrong message to many people in power.

This administration's response to events in Egypt has basically been responding to these events with a confused and unreliable voice that will have, I believe, serious consequences, long-term consequences for the cause of freedom and stability in this volatile region. And it does a disservice, I might add, to American security interests as well.

President Mubarak has been a force for stability, even though his rule has been very imperfect and less than democratic. Improving that does not mean making decisions that could well result in the empowerment of radical Islamic forces like the Muslim Brotherhood.

Specifically, President Mubarak reached out to his people and to democratic countries throughout the world with an announcement that neither he nor his son would run for President and that he would work with those to try to ensure free and fair elections. Well, giving the moderates and the democratic forces in Egypt 8 months, until September, to organize and to participate in a democratic process seems to be a responsible strategy and something that we should have embraced and worked to make sure that it was indeed ensuring free and fair elections. Instead, the Obama administration began calling for immediate change, the alternative to President Mubarak must be put in place now.

Well, what would that result in? By immediately installing a new government could well mean that we are installing a government that has not been elected to anything. And while Mubarak is im-

perfect, the people that we are saying should be installed now wouldn't have any legitimacy in terms of democratic base work for their power, especially if those people who end up—because we are demanding immediate leaving power of Mubarak now—end up to be anti-democratic in their very nature, or so radically Islamic that they wouldn't permit real freedom in their country.

I would argue that the administration's actions have been contrary to the long-term interests of democracy and stability in Egypt. So I would hope that we would work with the administration, all of us would try to do our part. And I would hope that the United States does not in any way compromise our long-term commitment to the Egyptian people that we side with democracy, but we need to do this in a responsible way that will not in the long term result in less democracy and less freedom.

You wonder about some of these young women who are marching down the streets complaining about Mubarak, whether or not they are going to end up with a regime that forces them to wear burqas and cover their face and shut up and not be involved in national politics, like we have seen in other radical Islamic countries.

We have been doing more than just throwing Mubarak under the bus, we have been throwing him to the wolves. And perhaps the future of democracy and freedom in that part of the world will be eaten up as well.

I just went on a rambling rave myself. You have 40 seconds to make your comments.

Mr. ABRAMS. Just a very quick one. I think it is important to distinguish what can be done tomorrow and what can't. There can't be elections tomorrow, not anything that we would regard as free and fair and reasonable ones. They could lift the emergency law tomorrow. After 30 years, it is time. Omar Suleiman said, yes, it should be lifted as soon as security conditions permit. He has been saying that for 30 years. It is time.

Mr. CRANER. I think the best judge is whether they are moving forward with the kind of conditions that could lead to free and fair elections. When the Vice President says his people aren't ready for democracy, that answers the question.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. The gentleman's time has expired.

I am pleased to yield to Mr. Payne of New Jersey, the ranking member on Africa, Global Health and Human Rights, for 5 minutes.

Mr. PAYNE. Thank you very much.

As you know, we have a history of supporting dictators. Usually our foreign policy has very little to do with the manner that they treat their people—the Mobutus in Zaire to the Savimbis in Angola, the F.W. Botha in South Africa. We can go on and on—the Shah of Iran; Marcos in the Philippines.

How do you see us moving in the future? Are we going to, in your opinions, still back bad guys that we know they are bad but they are okay to us, or are we going to sort of have democracy to try to have a process going in those countries where you can have the will of the people expressed? How do you see us going in the future? Because this Egypt thing is not over. It is not the Obama administration that fouled up somewhere. This thing, as you know,

goes way back to Britain wanting to block up the Suez Canal back in the fifties. So what do you think about our relationship to dictators in the future?

Mr. CRANER. Obviously, it is important right now to spend a lot of time on Egypt. What happens in Egypt is going to have huge consequences for the region. But I hope that this experience with Egypt, where the conventional wisdom was it was going to be stable—certainly the conventional wisdom was that Tunisia was going to be stable—will lead to us look around the world at other countries that we think are important to the United States where we are currently muting ourselves on democracy and human rights. It doesn't mean you have to push one or the other; you can have a relationship, if you need to, with an authoritarian government. But you can't believe the dissidents and the democrats who we have learned time and again will one day inevitably come to power on their own, and when they do come to power they are looking around and saying, "America did nothing for us."

So whether it is in Kazakhstan or Azerbaijan or China, we need to be looking at these countries and thinking about what we are doing whenever change may come to those places.

Mr. SATLOFF. Just to add a specific word about where we might ensure our focus in the broader Middle East, events in Egypt have obscured our attention from Tunisia, and I think we need to make sure that the Tunisian example actually leads to a good outcome. It is on a positive path, but it is by no means assured that Tunisia will lead to the right endgame. I think we can't lose focus on that.

And secondly, sir, I would suggest that in the Palestinian Authority, certainly in the West Bank, it is important that our partner have greater popular legitimacy, in talking about the leadership for the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Abass. And there is no better way to have popular legitimacy than through the popular support of elections.

And so I think we should consider talking with our friends there about ways to enhance their popular legitimacy through elections. We don't want the type of change that we have seen in Egypt and Tunisia to be the norm of how change happens in our friendly countries.

Mr. ABRAMS. Yes, I agree with both my friends here, Mr. Payne.

I think one of the things we have learned is that the so-called "realism" that led us to support these dictators is not so realistic in the end after all, and a policy of supporting democracy may actually turn out to be more realistic.

Mr. PAYNE. Well, there is a situation going on in Cote d'Ivoire, which not much attention of course is being paid to right now, but the current President was defeated, everyone agrees he has been defeated, but he is refusing to leave. With 16 elections coming up and after this year, if this person who lost the election, Gbagbo, remains to stay in, that simply sends a bad message for these 16 elections coming, and also, it might even have impact on the police in the Middle East,

Let me just ask one last question. Both you, Mr. Abrams, and you, Dr. Satloff, have different opinions on the support from your Egypt group about military support and assistance continuing. You

both have opposite positions. Could you, in about 15 seconds each, tell your position and why?

Mr. SATLOFF. My position is that we should use whatever leverage we have to try to convince the Egyptian Army to make the right decision. Positive conditionality. There is always a time in the future that we can cut off aid when it is apparent that the Egyptian military has taken the path solely of repression and suppression of popular protests.

Mr. ABRAMS. I think we actually do agree on that. I wouldn't cut it off today, but I would send a very strong message today to the Egyptian military that it is in jeopardy.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. The gentleman's time has expired.

If I could ask Mr. Royce, before I recognize you, if you could take over as chair for me. I have to meet some constituents. And I will recognize Mr. Royce, the chair of the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade for 5 minutes of questioning. Thank you, Mr. Royce.

Mr. ROYCE [presiding]. Mr. Craner, I had an opportunity over the weekend to meet with seven Egyptians from Cairo and Alexandria, who recently traveled here from Egypt. Here is what they shared with me. Their observation was that the Muslim Brotherhood did not start this uprising, as they called it. It came from young professionals. But they said that if the Brotherhood gets the upper hand, eventually it would be a bloody terror for those who did not subscribe to the fundamentalist approach of the Brotherhood. They said if you want to see how this will play out, think of what happened to the Baha'i in Iran; think of what happened to the students and to the young democratic enthusiasts that went to the streets against the Shah and then ultimately found themselves in prison or shot when the fundamentalist regime came to power. They said it is the fate of the guillotine if the revolution goes the wrong way afterwards.

Here was their point: They said the Brotherhood is a group that does not believe in pluralism. There is no equality for women; there is no equality under their conception of Islam for non-Muslims or for Muslims who deviate from their viewpoint. So they say they have embraced elections as a means to power, basically. And given their past history, in their view, why shouldn't there be qualifications on candidates that don't support pluralism? Because otherwise it is going to be a situation where you are going to have one free election one time, because they view this group as hell bent on this path. So I was going to ask you about that.

I was going to ask you, should they not be allowed to participate? And maybe you could tell us a little bit about the Brotherhood's lack of democratic bona fides.

Now the other thing that I wanted to ask you about is the effort that the United States made some years ago with Hernando de Soto. This is the other issue they wanted to share with me, the utter corruption in that society. Hernando de Soto, the Peruvian economist, went to Egypt in 2004, did a massive study, and found that gaining the legal title to a vacant piece of land takes 10 years; to open a bakery takes about 500 days. You have 56 government

agencies you have to go through. They were telling me about this process in Egypt, you know, 20 bribes to open a small company.

So they said, "Look at the consequences of that." Hernando de Soto brought that plan forward to the Egyptian Cabinet to unlock an amount of capital in Egypt 100 times more—more than that of what we give Egypt in support, right? And they have a Minister in Egypt that supports a reform to bring transparency to the legal system, and this guy was sacked. And as a consequence, as de Soto said, hidden forces of the status quo blocked crucial elements of the reform. You cannot get reform under the current system.

And this is something else I wanted to ask you to respond to. In the United States, here we have a U.S.-funded study that helps institute crucial legal and institutional reforms that is blocked by the government. Do we object, do we protest, do we register a complaint, do we threaten to cut off aid? Do situations like this even get the Ambassador's attention? What do we do about this level of corruption in the regime? If you can respond.

Mr. CRANER. In a place that is so corrupt as Egypt, I don't think a plan like Hernando de Soto's could move forward. I think it would take a different kind of system. Here I would point to Georgia, which under Shevardnadze was one of the most corrupt countries in the former Soviet Union, which is quite a claim. They have moved forward dramatically under their new government to end corruption. I think when Saakashvili came into power, over 90 percent of the people reported they had had to pay a bribe within the previous 3 months. Now it is exactly the opposite. But I don't think in a system like Egypt that on corruption is rotten to the core you are going to see any kind of change. There are too many people that have their hand in the till under this system. It is changeable, as Georgia has shown, but not under this regime.

I think on the issue of the Muslim Brotherhood, you and I faced this issue in South Africa almost 20 years ago, about whether certain parties were going to be allowed to run. At that time, the issue was whether or not they were committed to nonviolence. I think those kind of conditions are very, very fair. It shouldn't be that people who are against pluralism or are pro-violence are allowed to be violent on a Tuesday and stand for election on a Thursday.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, I thank you, Mr. Craner. I am going to go to Mr. Satloff for any observations on that as well.

Mr. SATLOFF. Two brief observations about the political system and its potential evolution vis-à-vis the Muslim Brotherhood. There is currently a constitutional clause in Egypt that no party based on religion is allowed. It will be for the Egyptians to determine whether that gets amended. Should they ask the United States or the U.S. Embassy for its advice, I would urge that we should not advocate for changing that fundamental principle.

Secondly, there is some discussion about the order of elections, Presidential, parliamentary, et cetera. It makes much sense that there be a Presidential election before there is a new parliamentary election. Under the Egyptian Constitution, the chances of a moderate, liberal-minded Presidential victor are far greater than a parliamentary outcome that would lead similarly to that end.

Mr. ROYCE. I would like to yield to Mr. Berman for a point.

Mr. BERMAN. I would very much agree, except for one issue. Will this Parliament that is in place as a result of a manipulated election make the changes that we think are necessary to ensure the legalized parties create a process?

Mr. SATLOFF. I think the short answer is this Parliament will do what the political leadership of the country tells it to do. So I would not make changing the composition of this Parliament the be-all and end-all of Egyptian political reform.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you, Mr. Satloff.

I would like to go now to Mr. Engle of New York for your questioning.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. I would like to ask a question about Egypt and also do Lebanon as well, because I wrote the Syria Accountability Act. And one of the things that we used in that act—I did it with the current chair, Ms. Ros-Lehtinen—we wanted Syria to get out of Lebanon. And we know that there has been a lot of change and uproar in Lebanon. First of all, the pro-Western government fell, there is a new Prime Minister Designate Mikati.

I would like to ask anyone who would care to answer, what is your assessment of him? Is he qualified for the position? He was obviously nominated by Hezbollah, so that makes me worried. So I would just like you to answer that.

I would also like to speak about the Special Tribunal in Lebanon. Hezbollah bitterly opposes the Special Tribunal because that is the international body investigating the 2005 assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Hariri. It is widely expected that the Special Tribunal will indict some members of Hezbollah.

And what should the administration do if that happens and the Lebanese Government decides to withdraw its material and verbal support from the STL? Should we at that point attempt to pick up the financial slack? So let me ask that Lebanese question first.

And then my question on Egypt is: What are the similarities that you see between the uprising in Iran and the revolution of 1979 and this? Many people have said it is very similar, many people have said no because of differences. I would like to hear your analyses on it. Anybody who would care to answer either question, I would be grateful.

Mr. ABRAMS. Mr. Engel, I will just start.

I think that Mr. Mikati is, in the technical sense, qualified to be Prime Minister of Lebanon, but as you said, he was put there by Hezbollah. This is supposed to be, under their Constitution, a Sunni seat, but the Sunni community did not choose him. He is a cat's-paw for Hezbollah. This is, in a sense, a soft coup by Hezbollah. And I would argue that if Prime Minister Mikati does not support this Special Tribunal for Lebanon, I hope our relations with him reflect that. I would, for example, suggest he not be invited to the United States to meet the President, to go to the White House, to come up here on the Hill, if that is the position that he is taking.

Just very quickly, I would draw two distinctions between the Iran situation and that of Egypt. One, there is no Khomeini. There is no great opposition leader that we have to fear, let's say, on the Muslim Brotherhood side; nor is there, unfortunately, a Walesa, a Havel, on the democratic side.

The second difference is the army collapsed in Iran, and of course it hasn't collapsed in Egypt. And one of the things that we are all saying here today is we don't want it to collapse. We want it, however, not to try to maintain the old regime forever or people will lose faith in it.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Mr. CRANER. I think that was an important point, that there is no central religious figure to fear in Egypt. And I think that things have not gotten so rotten and so bad in Egypt that you really have people accruing to that religious leader or religious party and leaving almost no room for what we used to call moderates in Iran.

Mr. SATLOFF. First, I think we should remember how fresh and new the Egyptian situation is. Less time has passed in Egypt than what took Ben Ali to leave in Tunisia, and that was so fast. We should not rule out the idea that leaders will emerge, whether it is this Google executive, or someone else may emerge to be the face of the faceless revolution, and that would be important.

I do concur with the sentiments that were expressed by Elliott on Lebanon, Congressman. I would just add that there are Security Council requirements, both regarding the Special Tribunal on Lebanon and regarding security in the south, that the Government of Lebanon is required to maintain. And it would be appropriate for the United States not to have to act alone, but to act in concert with its Security Council partners to see that either this government in Lebanon fulfills its requirements or is censured. And that would be a great embarrassment to Lebanon, to the Hezbollah-backed government.

Mr. ENGEL. I just think, and let me conclude, that the violation in Lebanon of the cease-fire in the war with Israel, with all these missiles and weapons which were supposed to be not allowed to come back in the country, is really alarming and it is something we really need to take very seriously.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Engel.

I am pleased to yield to the chairman of our Subcommittee on the Middle East, Mr. Chabot, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Mr. Crane, you stated in your testimony that as a democratic form of government slowly begins to take shape in Iraq, having similar political developments in Cairo could have great consequences for the region. Conversely, given the violent birth of and halting steps toward democracy in Iraq, chaos or a more repressive government in Egypt will discourage and further delay much needed reform in the region.

Could you elaborate on the implications for our efforts in Iraq of the events currently unfolding in Egypt and how will it affect U.S. leverage?

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. And Mr. Craner, if you could put the microphone a little closer to your mouth. Thank you.

Mr. CRANER. I said that, because if you look historically over the last 5,000 years, the two centers of learning and intellect in the region have been principally Cairo, but also Baghdad. And so if you are a Syrian or an Algerian or a Yemeni, you have traditionally looked to or you may have gone to school in the old days in one

of those two places. Today, you may also have gone to the American University in Beirut. But those are the kind of two traditional intellectual leader cities and countries in the region. So if you had democracy in those two principle pillars for Arab culture, then it would be difficult, if you are in another Arab country, to say democracy is not going to work here.

Alternatively, if things were to go badly in Egypt, you would then be in a position in another country to say, is that what they mean by democracy? You had all that violence in Iraq and look what happened in Egypt. So the stakes are very, very high in Egypt, I think.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you.

Mr. Abrams, over the past decades, the United States has given the Mubarak regime billions of dollars in nonsecurity assistance, and such assistance has, unfortunately, not led to significant political or economic reforms, as we all know. How should the executive branch and Congress going forward leverage our economic assistance to encourage real reforms?

Mr. ABRAMS. Mr. Chabot, I think there have been changes in the Egyptian economy, and the rich have gotten a lot richer. There are now Egyptian billionaires on the Forbes list, but there has not been much trickle down and the poor remain desperately poor.

I would hope that what we would try to do in our economic assistance is, first of all, help those who are poorest. And secondly, see if we can encourage the new government that is going to be coming in to adopt economic reforms that are not simply about increasing foreign direct investment or getting the stock market to rise, but about helping people in the lower middle class, working class, and the poorest people.

One of the problems we have with our aid program in Egypt is Egyptians don't know it exists. Some other countries have built stadiums and things like that that are very visible, but an awful lot of Egyptians don't know that we have given billions of dollars in aid to Egypt.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you very much.

Dr. Satloff, I was struck by your comment that you made that basically the worst of all worlds for the United States to be in was to be neither feared, nor respected, nor loved. I would invite yours, and if there is any time left, the other members—how can we avoid that hereon?

Mr. SATLOFF. Generally, the rule in the Middle East is reward your friends and punish your adversaries, and it is usually a smart policy to follow. The Egyptian case cuts through the middle of it because we have a partner who is both friend to us and adversary to us in different respects. Clarity here is important. I think, as I said earlier, that the longer that there is no visible change at the top, the more our influence wanes.

If I could add just one brief comment, sir, about the economic question, I suspect that the leaders of Egypt view it a bit differently. They probably see that all these protestors have cell phones, Facebook pages, access to computers; they can't be so poor. And they are probably saying to themselves, my gosh, all that work that we did to advance the Egyptian economy only led to popular protests, only led to more opposition. I think we should be wary elsewhere that leaders will find ways to limit the sort of growth

that led to the popular protest. Egypt has had 5 percent growth for years, and this is an outcome that authoritarians will be fearful of in the future.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you. I have 15 seconds, if either one of the other gentlemen would like to—okay. I yield back, Madam Chair. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chabot.

I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to Mr. Meeks of New York, the ranking member on the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And congratulations to you, also.

Let me just say this and throw out a question. I, too, over the weekend have had the opportunity to sit down with some young people, some who just came back from Egypt who reside in my district, et cetera. And I have got to tell you, I have come away tremendously impressed in all of the conversation that we have been having today.

I have confidence in the Egyptian people. They have gone to the streets and said what they want and what they don't want. They clearly want to move into a more free society, something that I don't think anybody could have ever done for them. They did it for themselves. And as a result of that, I know we can talk and we have our interests, of course, but ultimately they are going to decide their own Constitution. And I think that to the degree that we try to say, well, this should be in there or this should not be in there, then—it is not anti-American now, but if we try to tell them what should or should not happen, just as they are revolting against Mubarak, that then I think becomes the danger that we have because they are clear.

Now, one of the things that they were not as clear on when I asked them, is who could rise from among them to be a leader, who could be the candidate; because clearly there is no clear leader within the opposition. And my question to them was then, in all of this, in doing a new Constitution, et cetera, it takes individuals to sit down, to talk, to negotiate. I referenced our Constitution, our men at that time, and hopefully now men and women will be sitting down and talking.

Have you any idea who is in that group that will be talking to help rewrite the Constitution so that whoever comes up, we will then have an entree to try to continue the kind of relationship that we have had in the past but in a democratic forum?

Mr. SATLOFF. Congressman, yesterday the Egyptian Government appointed a panel of constitutional experts—judges, lawyers, et cetera—many of whom are very loyal to President Mubarak, some have been vocal opponents of the President over the last number of years. It is not clear that this group will have popular legitimacy.

There are other groups that are out there as well. There is a group called the Wise Men, public figures, both businessmen and civic leaders. There are the leaders of the youth. They have tried to organize themselves into an important coalition of leaders. There are the traditional parties that the regime has tolerated; they are small, they have been around for many years. They don't have

much popular support. But they do understand the Constitution and they do understand Egyptian law.

There is no coalescing yet, they don't all agree, except almost all of them seem to agree on the idea that the President, either in his person or in his authorities, must go. That important, visible, irrevocable change seems to be a common feature of the opposition.

Mr. CRANER. I think there are leaders out there. You have El Baradei, you have Ayman Nour, you have others. There are many people whose names are not household words in the United States or maybe even in Egypt because of the repression all these years. I think what will be important is to note, number one, if you have an election soon nobody is going to know those leaders' names. And number two, if the good people in the middle are not able to come together to form a coalition and perhaps to come up with a common candidate, then you could have things going badly.

Mr. MEEKS. What—go ahead.

Mr. ABRAMS. I agree with that, and I think there are people who will come to the fore, because like Ayman Nour, who ran against Mubarak in 2005, they are known to be opponents of the old regime.

Mr. MEEKS. And within those groups what are you hearing in regards because when we do talk about U.S. interests I am also concerned about our ally, Israel. Is there any kind of consensus because at least there have been a peace, might have been a cold peace, and you talk about the Suez Canal, you talk about—and I know that President Netanyahu is concerned. Is there any conversation that you have heard on the ground in regards to Israel?

Mr. SATLOFF. There is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood has gone on record as seeking the cancelation of the peace treaty. They have opposed it from the beginning, and they will oppose it to the very end. Other organizations have publicly said this isn't about Israel. Thankfully this is not about Israel. This is what Elliott said earlier; this is not about America even giving our support. This is about their desire for change.

We have to be vigilant that a situation doesn't come, that it becomes about Israel and America. And I think we should all be quite worried that elements of the regime just last week tried to play the Israel card and the Jewish card, putting on Egyptian national television so-called Israeli spies, that evidently were provocateurs in the protest, or protestors that admitted to being trained by American Jewish organizations to overthrow Mubarak. This is all obviously poppycock, but it plays to the conspiratorial mindset, which many may have, and it is a sign of desperation on the part of the regime.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. The gentleman's time has expired. I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to Mr. Fortenberry, the vice chair of Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights Subcommittee.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you gentlemen for coming today. I believe it is very important that we stand by any people who are pursuing their highest aspirations. Now with that said, the doorway to a vibrant and sustainable democracy rests really on two pillars fundamentally. First is an inculturated understanding of the dignity and therefore rights of

every person and secondly an understanding of the nature of responsible citizenship as it seeks to uphold the rule of law. Then from there flow the institutions of society that give rise to civil capacity and can sustain things like freedom of speech and freedom of religion and freedom of assembly and a vibrant democracy with free and fair elections.

The delicate question that is before us is, where is Egypt on that spectrum? Because without sufficiently developed institutions the danger or probability increases that this situation is exploitable by those who would use democracy to undermine it to pursue other ends. We had a discussion earlier as to what happened in Gaza. I heard your point, Mr. Craner, but at the same time, if you are allowing democracy to be used by those who are going to act antithetically to it, you may end up in a situation which is much worse off.

With that said, again we want to stand by people as they are pursuing their highest aspirations, but I think that is the narrow issue here. Where is Egypt in terms of civil capacity so that we increase the probability that this type of hopeful and good outcome can occur.

Mr. ABRAMS. Just one brief comment, Mr. Fortenberry, this is the measure of a terrible legacy of Hosni Mubarak, who had 30 years to slowly, steadily build this civic culture and instead built a culture of suspicion and suppression and leaves soon, even on his own timetable, with having done none of it.

Clearly Tunisia is in a better situation. Tunisia, with $8,500 per capita income and roughly 85–80 percent literacy. But I guess I would say we are who we are. I mean the people of Egypt are rising up and demanding this. And what perhaps we can help advise with is the kind of institutional protections that after all our own founders put in because they wondered whether we had the civic culture to do this yet and they were very mistrustful of majorities. So maybe we can help as they think through what a new Constitution would look like.

Mr. CRANER. In terms of civil capacity, there are many countries less developed that have become democratic. And I always use the example of Mongolia, quite an isolated place, with not a lot of civil capacity, Mali in Africa. The list—I could cite you a long list, but in terms of civil capacity——

Mr. FORTENBERRY. Are a comparable in terms of——

Mr. CRANER. Much less, much less, what would you call civil capacity in terms of the understanding of the issues you were talking about that have been able to come to the fore and become democratic. I think one of the issues in Egypt is from where we sit it is going to be hard to slow what is going on in Egypt. I think we can help shape it as it moves forward. We can even hasten it moving forward. But at the least we can do is shape it. But I think it will be very, very hard for us to slow it.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. One of the problems with analogies and this is clear is that perhaps you didn't have entities as well organized as the Muslim Brotherhood is going to reject fundamental aspects of what are going to provide the foundation for vibrant democracy as we project on it. I think that is where it falls short, but I understand your point.

Mr. CRANER. I would also point you, however, to some of the—Muslim Brotherhood is unique certainly in Egypt, but there have been other countries where there have been well organized entities that went into elections and were defeated. And I think here of the former communist parties.

Mr. FORTENBERRY. I just picked up your language when you said hopefully moderates will come out well. Again that points to this delicate situation that we are now in and we don't exactly know where we are.

Mr. CRANER. But we need to get in and shape it and not just be passive spectators, which is essentially what we are doing right now.

Mr. SATLOFF. Just one brief analytical distinction. Egyptians are generally religiously conservative, but we should not equate that with membership in the Muslim Brotherhood, which is an ideological party with political goals. We shouldn't believe that all Egyptians if they are not liberals they are necessarily Brotherhood members. We would fall into their trap.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. The gentleman's time has expired. I am pleased to yield 5 minutes to my Florida colleague, Mr. Deutch, for his questions.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. Dr. Satloff, you said just a couple minutes ago that this is not about Israel or America, this is about what is happening in Egypt. But I would like to focus on what is happening in Egypt as it relates to the two, particularly for people, for Egyptian citizens. If you could discuss the implications on the ground, not just with regard to the border with Egypt, but the broader implications should the next government choose to abrogate that peace treaty with Israel. What does it means in terms of trade, what does it mean in terms of exports and qualifying industrial zones? If you could speak to that so that we have a better sense of what the thinking is and how it might play out.

Mr. SATLOFF. Thank you, Congressman. I think we have gotten quite used to the idea of Egypt and Israel linked in peace, even if it is a cold peace, and the world in which we live is shaped by that. But to take that out and change that is huge. Israel for the last 30 years has operated on the assumption it didn't need to deploy a single soldier on the Egyptian border. That has opened up huge opportunities for Israel. It has enabled them to lower their defense spending, enabled them to move elsewhere, take other risks for peace. A change such as this, if it convinces the Israelis they have to rethink border security with Egypt, if they have to worry that the Egyptians are goings to militarize the Sinai, if they have to worry that the Gaza border is now going to become free flow for weapons with the Egyptian connivance instead of against Egypt's efforts, this changes everything that is possible for peace and security in this region.

Egypt obviously will lose its American support if it severs its relationship. It will look for other partners, probably more nefarious partners than the United States. The Suez Canal becomes subject to possible closure or selective opening to various partners. The Egyptians, for example, have permitted the Israelis to transit their own submarines through the Suez Canal. The idea that in an era beyond peace that this would be possible is difficult to imagine.

So there is a longer list, I could go on.

Mr. DEUTCH. Well, if could you speak first to the nefarious partners that might be out there should this decision be made and secondly to the specific statement by the Muslim Brotherhood over the weekend that they recognize why it is in Egypt's interest to continue the peace treaty. Do we take them at their word as well? If not, again speak to who else might be out there that would be looking for this opportunity?

Mr. SATLOFF. The statements I have seen by representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood are not supportive of the peace treaty. Actually I think the official position is they want the peace treaty to be up for a new vote by a new Parliament and a national referendum on whether it should be sustained.

In terms of more nefarious possible partners for Egypt, well, there are plenty of candidates of countries that wouldn't have our conditionality, wouldn't have our desire for popular, for civic rights. Whether they are—they may be friends of ours even, like the Saudis and others, but they are not going to have democracy as part of their portfolio. And then there are more nefarious characters, whether it is the Chinese, the Venezuelans or other, that would come up with $1 billion to pluck the prize of Egypt from us, and I think it would be a price for them well spent.

Mr. DEUTCH. Mr. Craner, you are nodding. Other thoughts, if you could broaden that discussion.

Mr. CRANER. I think Rob was very, very comprehensive in his answer to you. I think the other thing Egyptians would have to think about as they move that is their own economy. Nobody is going to want to invest in an area that looks like a war zone, which that may if that happens.

The second thing the Egyptian military has to think about is whatever else you can say about the United States economy versus China and all this stuff, we continue to have the world's best military, and they would have to decide if they wanted to take Iranian weapons, Russian weapons, Chinese weapons, and Chinese-Russian training and then try to go to war with Israel.

Mr. DEUTCH. And then finally, Mr. Abrams, if you could just speak again to the Muslim Brotherhood and the relationship with Hamas, funding for Hamas, those direct ties and our concerns as this goes forward.

Mr. ABRAMS. Hamas is part of the Muslim Brotherhood internationally and the Mubarak regime has always been quite afraid of the link between the two. The question would really be about the Hamas border with Egypt, which is the Sinai-Gaza border. The Egyptian Government has done a mixed job. I mean, if you ask Israelis, there are tons of weapons that float in through those tunnels. It is hard to say the Egyptian Government couldn't have stopped more of them had it really been trying to. So it isn't as if we go from a golden age now to an age of trouble. But there is no question that one of the questions that the Muslim Brotherhood is going to have to answer is what do you want the relationship between the new Government of Egypt and Hamas to be?

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch. Thank you, Mr. Abrams.

Mr. Rivera, my Florida colleague, is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. One of my concerns or one of my main concerns in this crisis is the impact on U.S. interests vis-à-vis Israel. I have one question first for Dr. Satloff and Secretary Abrams. Obviously the situation in Egypt is very much in flux, but regardless of what emerges American interests remain constant. It is imperative that Egypt today and throughout any political transition continues to honor its international obligations and play a positive role in the region. Specifically, Egypt must honor its commitment to peace with Israel as enshrined in the Camp David Accords and ensure the integrity of the Egyptian-Israel and Egyptian-Gaza borders.

So for Dr. Satloff, my question, what message should the United States be delivering to the parties regarding Egypt's peace with Israel?

Mr. SATLOFF. Very simply, Congressman, the United States should be public and private in saying the type of Egypt that we can support is only the type of Egypt that fulfills its international commitments, that we cannot support an Egypt that flouts or violates its fundamental international commitments. That applies to the military, it applies to economic. This is the foundation of our relationship.

With the Israelis, we need to begin serious security conversations now about upgrading the United States-Israel strategic partnership. There are many things that we can do in concert in terms of border security, in terms of intelligence, and in terms of other items, and it should be seen that we are doing this so that the region understands that we recognize the shock to the Israeli security system and that we can do what we can to help cushion and assist the Israelis through the shock.

Mr. RIVERA. And for Secretary Abrams, over the years the United States has sold a great deal of military equipment to Egypt. At the same time we are deeply committed to Israel's qualitative military edge, essentially Israel's ability to defend itself against any combination of conventional threats. Part of the calculus in providing weapons to Egypt was that it was committed to peace with Israel.

If Egypt's commitment toward peace with Israel changes, how should that affect future decisions about the sale and maintenance of weapon systems to the Egyptians?

Mr. ABRAMS. Mr. Rivera, I think we should be very clear with the new Government of Egypt that the building block for us is their international obligation, their support of peace in the region, and if they move away from that, our aid program is impossible. I think that we can do that privately at first, rather than browbeating them, but I think we need to make it very, very clear and make sure that the Egyptian army understands that it has been obligation to tell the civilians, to persuade the civilians, to talk to the new Parliament so that the national debate shows that it is in Egypt's interest, they are not doing this as a favor to us, not doing this as a favor to Israel. It is in Egypt's interest to keep those commitments.

Mr. RIVERA. Mr. Craner, anything to add on either front?

Mr. CRANER. Just that this large assistance package began with the Camp David Accords. If the Camp David Accords are no longer going to be operative, there is no need for the assistance.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you so much, Madam Chair. I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Rivera. Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island is recognized for 5 minutes. Welcome.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and congratulations to you and thank you to the panel for a great presentation. A special welcome to Dr. Satloff; it is wonderful to see you.

I have really two issues that I would ask the panel to address. The first is just yesterday in the Providence Journal there was a headline, Egypt's Unrest Raises Oil Prices. And this seems to be another example of where our national security interests and our ability to wean ourselves from dependence on foreign oil intersect. And so my first question is really is there any reason to believe in the short term that there will be consequences to the oil supply here in this country, knowing that Egypt is not a big producer, but that lots of oil is transported.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Cicilline, can I interrupt you for 1 second?

Mr. CICILLINE. Certainly.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, and we won't take away from your time. Mr. Berman and I have to go to the floor to handle the debate. And I will ask Mr. McCaul of Texas to take over the chair. And if we could start Mr. Cicilline's time again. Thank you very much.

Mr. CICILLINE. So in light of this uncertainty in the region in the short term, is there likely to be any impact, and then add to that that 40 percent of natural gas consumed by Israel comes from Egypt, which I know the Muslim Brotherhood has already spoken out against, what are the implications in terms of energy? And I hope there will be a call to action on behalf of our country to develop a comprehensive energy policy that is serious about investing in clean energy and the development and production of renewable energy.

The second area I would like to hear your thoughts on is the issue of leadership of the revolution. It seems as if it is really organic and it is really the people of Egypt that are leading this revolution. And I think we have to be careful that even if we could identify the emerging leaders we have to walk this tightrope where we want to be sure that this is a decision of the Egyptian people, and so we can't be seen to have selected or endorsed new leadership.

On the other hand, it sounds like investments in democracy promotion would be a useful tool to help fuel that kind of development. The question really is, is it too late for this country in terms of our playing in that area because they are now in the midst of the revolution, or are there some strategies that can support the emerging democratic leadership, whoever that is?

Mr. ABRAMS. To say a word about energy, Mr. Cicilline, so far no, obviously the prices have risen because of uncertainty. But so far the Canal is intact and the Egyptian army seems to want to keep it that way.

There was a terrorist attack on the gas pipeline to Israel, and it is not working right now. It will take several more days to get it back online. The Israelis I think need to worry that Egyptian domestic politics may interfere in the medium term with their supplies. They do have supplies offshore and one of the things that has happened is it has changed a little bit the debate within Israel about the importance of those supplies and the need to get them online a lot faster.

I yield to my colleagues on the question of how we can help this democratic transition.

Mr. SATLOFF. Just a word about energy before that, Congressman, I think that now is the moment when we need to be talking very clearly with the Saudis and our Gulf partners about their excess capacity, which is significant and would be quite helpful right now to help ensure that oil prices, which is really speculation on the sense of fear and uncertainty, that oil prices don't take a dynamic of their own. Those governments are very angry at the United States for their perception that we threw Mubarak under the bus, which I think is incorrect, but so be it. We need to have a real serious strategic conversation with the Saudis and their partners about their use of excess capacity.

Mr. CRANER. On the question——

Mr. CICILLINE. And Dr. Satloff, on the balance of the question is it too late for us to implement some strategies to support emerging democratic leadership in Egypt?

Mr. SATLOFF. I will let my colleague Lorne comment in just a moment. I don't think it is ever too late for us to do what we can. And we have great institutions, such as the one Lorne directs and others, that have people on the ground that have been working quietly for years. Now is the moment really where we should be more active and do what we can to help liberals, moderates, anti-Islamists capture the political space which is beginning to open for them.

Mr. CRANER. I wish we had more time on this before elections occur. The one good thing is that we and other groups, the National Democratic Institute included, have been able to have contact with folks there for a couple of years, less lately because our budgets were cut. So I don't think it is too late. One of the things I always tell folks to address the delicacy issue you are talking about is we have to understand it is their country and it is their fight. We cannot be leading them.

What we can do when we do this kind of work is to talk about how coalitions are formed without saying and here is your leader or what issues do you need to address without saying these are the issues and here are the solutions. One of the interesting things that has happened in the last 10 years is that many new democracies are interested in doing this kind of work. So, for example, the Tunisians are very interested in having people from Portugal, which began its democracy in 1975, and Serbia, which began its democracy in 1998. So it is not so much regarded as an American thing anymore when you are bringing in people from all over the world. It can be done. We can't do it passively, we need to get in there and start doing it.

The final thing I would say is for the opposition to understand what issues it is that the Egyptian people want addressed. I think if you go out there and say let's be more aggressive toward Israel or you go out there and say let's fix this economy, you are going to get different reactions.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you very much. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MCCAUL [presiding]. The Chair now recognizes himself for 5 minutes. We all support democracy. I think the concern a lot of us have is a power vacuum and who is going to fill that void in that power vacuum. There is also a great concern I know from other nations in the Middle East of what is going to happen to them and what ripple effect could potentially take place across the Middle East. Certainly countries like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Yemen.

When you look at the history of who is to fill this void I think obviously the young intellectual, secular model is what we want, but then there is, as we have discussed the Muslim Brotherhood. When you look at the history, Mr. Qutb, the literary scholar, trained in the United States but then advocating violence. Mr. Zawahiri, the number two man to bin Ladin. Those are the elements that we are talking about. That raises great concern to me in terms of—I think we know the answer to this question, how it is going to play out, but that is a great cautionary concern I think that all of us have.

Dr. Satloff, you talked about Iran as well with the vacuum. So I have got a couple more questions. I just want to throw that out and see what response or commentaries you had on that.

Mr. SATLOFF. Congressman, in the current environment no one is suggesting that any other institution but the army fill that void. Actually our hope is that the army separates itself from the President and then fills the void and then opened up a transition, an irrevocable transition. But no responsible person is suggesting to hand over the keys of the country to a leaderless, amorphous group. Everyone hopes for an institutional change, and that is why if this does happen, if the army makes the choice, which it so far has been reluctant to do, then we may be on the right path.

Mr. MCCAUL. Any other comments? Mr. Abrams.

Mr. ABRAMS. You asked about the ripple effects. I would say about that is there have been some good ones in the sense that the Governor of Algeria announced that after 19 years the emergency law would be ended. The Government of Jordan, the King, announced that he has appointed a new Prime Minister with a mandate for reform. In Yemen the President announces he won't run again. So they are not going have a President for life, which is what they feared.

So to the extent that people can get ahead of the curve this will prove to be positive.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Craner.

Mr. CRANER. I think you are not yet seeing negative effects in any of the countries. I noted earlier if you are going to see effects it will probably be in the republics, not the monarchies for a variety of reasons. But I think these events drive home the point that President Bush made and that Secretary Clinton made in a speech

in UAE and another one in Munich, that not only do they need to get ahead of the events, but we need to get ahead of these events.

Mr. MCCAUL. I agree with that. Is there something to learn from that? When we look the Turkey they have a secular model of government. Do we have—is there any benefit to examine that model in terms of applying it to Egypt?

Mr. ABRAMS. I would say it is a mixed model in the sense that for years and years it looked like the right model, the AK Party, democratic, moderate, but we have seen in the last year real steps by the Prime Minister against freedom of the press in Turkey. And so I think Turkey now becomes a worrying model for the direction of Egypt.

Mr. MCCAUL. And last question, El Baradei has been, and I was at a meeting with him in Vienna. He is a very impressive man and he seems to be the type that could be a consensus builder. What are your thoughts in terms of him emerging as a potential leader in Egypt?

Mr. SATLOFF. In the polling that we did just last week in Cairo, El Baradei came up quite negligible in public opinion support. The top ranked person was for better or for worse the current Secretary General of the Arab League, Amr Moussa, who supports peace but isn't always such a friend of American interests in the broader Middle East.

Mr. MCCAUL. Mr. Craner.

Mr. CRANER. Mr. El Baradei would be a transitional figure at best.

Mr. MCCAUL. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Virginia, Mr. Connolly.

Mr. CONNOLLY. I thank my friend. And welcome. I know it has been a long morning, and thank you all for being patient.

I have two questions. First, Mr. Abrams, to you. You quoted Tom Lantos: "Does Egypt need more tanks or more schools?" Obviously a rhetorical question. You sound like a liberal Democrat. Thank you, in raising the question. But you also bemoaned a little bit the fact that other donors have visible projects they can point to, and the people can see the assistance is helping and we don't have so much of that.

The administration in which you served and the Senate in which I served actually consciously moved a lot of project-tied aid in Egypt to cash transfer because it made the client happier, but we paid a political price. I wonder if you want to comment on that in terms of in retrospect, did we make a mistake? And moving forward do we need to resist the temptation even though it takes long and it is clunky and it requires more people at USAID, but we pay a political price every time someone doesn't see the tangible benefit, in this case of the peace dividend.

Mr. ABRAMS. I agree and I think it was a mistake to do this. And we almost made an even larger mistake. The Mubarak regime has been pushing for probably 3 or 4 years now for some—sort of an endowment where the aid would be put into a giant pot where you and the Congress would lose all control going forward and for a while that was a popular proposal. I think it was blocked here on the Hill.

But I think what we see now is the error of having been so supportive of the Mubarak government. I would only add the usual statement is they were such great allies. Yes and no, you know there are Emirati forces fighting alongside us in Afghanistan. There are no Egyptian forces. There are others in the Arab world who have been much more helpful about bringing peace and democracy to Iraq after the war. President Mubarak was not helpful, and of course it is a very cold peace with Israel, under a regime, his regime, that propagated, not just anti-Israel, but terrible anti-Semitic feelings in Egypt.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Thank you. Mr. Craner, you talked about the consequences of in a sense the vacuum. When you have an autocratic regime and you don't allow political space to be created for legitimate opposition that is capable of governing, this is what happens. And we aided and abetted that, maybe through circumstances, whatever. I would argue clearly it is also a legacy of the Cold War where we saw the world in such stark bipolar terms, we kind of lost a lot of stuff in the antithesis.

But moving forward, it is easier said than done, isn't it? I mean, you have got a friendly allied government, it may be autocratic, and here you are, whether it is the Republican Institute or the Democratic Institute or the U.S. State Department, mucking around with the opposition that they don't want you mucking around with. How do we forge a coherent policy that allows us to help create political space, especially when the governing regime does not want us to?

Mr. CRANER. Because with every country, with every government there is what I would call an equation of relations with the United States. You have an X, Y, Z quotients. If X is the trade relationship, if Y the military relationship, you want to insert another quotient called democracy and human rights. And we shouldn't underestimate the power and how much attention people pay to us. And when they understand that the President and the Secretary of State highly value a particular quotient in the equation then they will pay attention to it. And skilled diplomats are able to use that. This is something I saw repeatedly in both the Bush-Baker and the Bush-Powell State Departments. Skilled diplomats can do both quite easily.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Mr. Satloff, did you want to comment?

Mr. SATLOFF. No, I defer.

Mr. CONNOLLY. Oh my gosh, I have 50 seconds left.

Elliot, I hope I see you at the synagogue. Thank you very much. You go to the synagogue in my neighborhood. Thank you all very much, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MCCAUL. The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I think the Egyptian experience of the past several weeks raises a number of questions, a lot of contradictions. But also I don't know that enough has been made out of the generational influence, not only in Egypt but throughout the Middle East and North Africa, and I think in Egypt 25 or 50 percent of the population is under the age of 25. What is different today is that these regimes have been very good at repression. And there are now tools of collabora-

tion, of organization that have are available to everybody in the world in this Web enabled world, and it is interesting that the Egyptian Government shut down the Internet, but so much information was out there before they did it, it essentially drove people into the streets, because that level of curiosity had been raised to a point where it was uncontrollable. I supposed that is both a good thing and a bad thing.

Mr. Satloff, you had indicated that the Muslim Brotherhood, you talk about contradictions, is an ideological party with very specific goals. Could you elaborate a little bit?

Mr. SATLOFF. Yes, Congressman. The Muslim Brotherhood was founded and retains its intention to Islamize society, to make Egyptian society first and other Muslim majority countries second, governed under Sharia law, Sharia law being the codified Muslim legal code. Now in some places the Muslim Brotherhood has spread. It started out in Egypt, it has spread in countries around the world. It takes different names in different places, like Hamas in the Palestinian arena, but it retains that ultimate goal. It has a variety of means toward that goal. At times it has used direct violence trying to assassinate Presidents and Prime Ministers. At other times it uses electoral politics, at other times is uses social welfare efforts to promote popularity, but it has never given up the goal. And the goal has only been compromised because of actions of the state. Namely, the state has repressed, thrown in jail its leaders, and it has been forced to give up certain aspects of its goal publicly and certain aspects of its means publicly. But I would argue that there is no fundamental change in the objective of the Muslim Brotherhood and we should be quite clear eyed about what that goal is, and it is very antithetical to our strategic interests and to our human rights and democracy interests.

Mr. HIGGINS. Is it possible to gauge the support for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt itself amongst the population? Is there a percentage that could be accurately applied relative to support amongst the popular——

Mr. SATLOFF. There is a common view among experts that it is somewhere about 20 or 30 percent. But none of us really know because the government has set up an electoral system which deprives all options other than supporting the brotherhood or supporting the regime. So we don't really know what the Brotherhood support is. I suspect it is in that ballpark, but it is certainly not a majority support among the Egyptian population. Here I just want to reaffirm the point I made earlier, we need to make a distinction between religiosity, people who pray and people who ascribe to a political ideology of compelling their compatriots to live under Islamic law. That is a very different approach.

Mr. HIGGINS. It seems like one of the reasons Egypt has historically supported the blockade of Gaza is because they wanted to ensure that Hamas remains Israel's problem and not their problem, which is indicative of a history of fearing, I presume, the Muslim Brotherhood which makes up Hamas.

This power vacuum, where do we suspect this thing is going to—how is this going to be filled? Anybody?

Mr. ABRAMS. The power vacuum in Cairo of course none of us know, and this is a key question as to whether the army can lead a steady but real transition to a new democratic system or not.

I do think one thing about Gaza: Initially the Egyptians wanted to have a lot more influence in Gaza and prevent a Hamas takeover. Once Hamas took over, they were very much afraid of a kind of infection between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza, Hamas. And they then began to enforce somewhat, haphazardly, they began to enforce a border. And there were some incidents where they arrested Hamas people and pushed them back over the border. But Mubarak I think was quite afraid of what the Hamas-Muslim Brotherhood cooperation could do.

Mr. HIGGINS. My time is up. Thank you, gentlemen.

Mr. MCCAUL. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas, Mr. Griffin.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Secretary Abrams, my understanding is that the movement in Egypt is an organic one for the most part and there is potentially a power vacuum there and that Egypt historically has done a good job in dealing with some of the extreme groups, fringe groups. With all of that in mind, looking forward to the intermediate term, 5 years or so down the road, what do you see al-Qaeda trying to do, if anything? And I mention this, I know there hasn't been a lot of discussion of al-Qaeda, but clearly some critical people in the al-Qaeda organization have ties to Egypt. And then I see this Wall Street Journal editorial, could al-Qaeda hijack Egypt's revolution? And I know it is all sort of speculation, but I would like for you to comment on how credible that speculation is. It seems to me if we did have incomplete knowledge, looking in hindsight, that this was coming and it did sort of organically bubble up, if you will, looking forward, what do we know about al-Qaeda and their interests? And I would assume that there is no question they would have a desire to capitalize and exploit this, but there may be structural resource limitations on their ability to do that. Do you want to comment on that? I don't know if you've seen this article but just on the general premise.

Mr. ABRAMS. Mr. Griffin, I think it is something we should be worrying about because al-Qaeda tends to thrive when there is an ungoverned space, Somalia, Yemen, or when the hand that suppresses it is lifted. I am sure they are looking at Egypt and wondering whether the security forces that have been fighting them will start being—will start pulling back, and that could happen now. It can happen in the medium term if you get new governments of Egypt where it is not so popular to suppress al-Qaeda, where the people who are running the country are telling the security forces don't be so tough or make trouble, I don't want any incidents. Because if they move back and I am thinking about things like guarding their borders or airports and seaports, if they lessen or lower their guard against al-Qaeda, we know enough of al-Qaeda to know that they are constantly looking around and they will move into Egypt.

So I think it is something to worry about. It is one of the reasons that I think it is so important the army not sacrifice its position in Egypt to save Hosni Mubarak and get him a few more months,

because we will need them to prevent exactly what you are I think rightly worried about.

Mr. GRIFFIN. What I would also be interested in is to hear your comment on if al-Qaeda is looking at northern Africa as a whole and not just Egypt as a potential opportunity. Are they looking to recruit there for their fights elsewhere or do you believe they would be looking to infiltrate there and establish themselves? It seems to me we have done such a good job, the United States has, in fighting them, particularly in terms of depleting their operational resources that they may not have the ability to do everything that they might like to do. Would they be recruiting there for fights in Afghanistan and Iraq or would they be trying to move into these countries?

Mr. ABRAMS. I think the answer is both. There is now a thing called al-Qaeda in the Maghreb, and I think we have seen or we have seen arrests in Morocco or arrests in Algeria. And they are both trying to recruit there and clearly have tried and succeeded in some cases in doing terrorist attacks in North Africa. So this is very much on their radar screen.

Mr. GRIFFIN. I see that I am about out of time. I have about 30 seconds, if there is anything you would like to add.

Mr. SATLOFF. A couple of quick points. One, al-Qaeda has proved quite opportunistic. I am sure they are seeing the situation in Tunisia and Egypt as the fall of their enemies, not so much a rise of democracy, and this will invite their activity in these countries.

Secondly, we should note that even such people as the assassin of Sadat up at Zamur escaped from jail in Egypt over the last 2 weeks, and I think we should be quite concerned about the potential for these fringe movements taking hold again.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you.

Mr. MCCAUL. I want to thank the witnesses for their excellent testimony here today. Our members may have additional questions, and we ask that our witnesses consider follow-up answers to any questions that may be forwarded. Without objection, by unanimous consent members will have 5 days to submit questions in writing, which the committee will then forward to our witnesses.

Again, thank you, and this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY AND ALLIES IN THE BROADER MIDDLE EAST, PART 2

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:35 a.m., in room 2172, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (chairman of the committee) presiding.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. We thank the folks in the audience with the yellow T-shirts. They have loved ones or relatives or interested folks about what is going on in Camp Ashraf and the many violations against the freedom-loving Iranians there. And we certainly will keep working so that they get the protection they deserve from the Iraqi Government and from our U.S. Government as well. So we welcome you today.

After recognizing myself and the ranking member, Mr. Berman, for 7 minutes each for our opening statements, I will recognize the chairman and the ranking member of our Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia for 3½ minutes each for their statements.

We will then hear from our witness Deputy Secretary Steinberg. Thank you, sir, for joining us.

Following Mr. Steinberg's testimony, we will move to questions and answers from members under the 5-minute rule.

Without objection, the witness' prepared statement will be made a part of the record, and members may have 5 days to insert statements and questions for the record subject to length limitations of the rules. Thank you very much. So if we could have the clock begin now.

Yesterday, as you know, we heard from a distinguished panel of experts and former administration officials on the dramatic transformation that is currently taking place in Cairo, in Beirut, and beyond. There was general agreement on the need for the United States to send a clear signal of support to those freedom-loving Egyptians who renounce violence, who are committed to democratic governance, who respect the security and the sovereignty of all Egypt's neighbors. There were echoes of statements by former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger from this past weekend that the U.S. relationship is not just with one person, but rather with all of the Egyptian people as a whole.

Former Deputy National Secretary Advisor Elliot Abrams reiterated that Mubarak created the very situation that Israel and the United States now fear, and that Mubarak's statements that he will not run in Egypt's scheduled elections is too late to enable a smooth transition.

America's role should be to facilitate a post-Mubarak transition in order to avert future violence, and restore calm, and guard against the use of the transition process by nefarious elements such as the Muslim Brotherhood to directly or indirectly undermine Egypt's evolution to a democratic republic.

There is no evidence that a well-thought-out contingency plan existed in the event that Mubarak's government became unstable or collapsed. The Wall Street Journal reported that Middle East experts at a January 31 meeting asked National Security Council officials, "Please tell me that you have contingencies in case Mubarak's regime collapses." The National Security Council reportedly admitted there were no such plans.

A February 2 report by foreignpolicy.com cites a senior administration official telling ABC that the administration was being compelled to change its strategy "every 12 hours. First it was negotiate with the opposition. Then events overtook that. Then it was orderly transition. Then it was, you, Mubarak, and your son can't run, and now it is the process has to begin now."

Turning to the Muslim Brotherhood, the New York Times reported on February 2 that "White House staff members made clear that they did not rule out engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood as part of an orderly process according to one attendee."

Engaging the Muslim Brotherhood must not be on the table. This also has implications for U.S. policy toward Lebanon, given statements last year by John Brennan, assistant to the secretary for homeland security and counterterrorism, describing Hezbollah's evolution from "purely a terrorist organization" to a militia, to what Mr. Brennan refers to as an organization that now has members within the Parliament and the Cabinet.

Has the State Department evaluated whether Lebanon now meets the statutory definition of a state sponsor of terrorism or a terrorist strength sanctuary, given Hezbollah control of that government? And what is the administration's stance on continuing to provide assistance to such a Lebanese Government? From Lebanon to Egypt, what is the administration's stance on the Muslim Brotherhood? Beyond the general parameters referenced in Deputy Secretary Steinberg's written statement that is in our packet, what are the specific components and contingencies of the U.S. strategy toward Egypt and for aiding in the transitional process? If a key U.S. goal is to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from taking over, and the Muslim Brotherhood is well funded, then shouldn't U.S. policy seek to shift economic aid away from the Mubarak government and focus it on strengthening responsible, peaceful democratic voices?

The administration's initial approach to Egypt was clearly not keeping up with the priorities in its first years. While driving increases in the international affairs budget, the administration made significant cuts to total bilateral funding for democracy and governance programming. USAID even reportedly adopted a policy of only funding those organizations officially approved as NGOs by

the Mubarak government. Repeated U.S. failure to enforce its own conditions and requirements on nonsecurity assistance to Egypt has compounded the problem.

So, Mr. Steinberg, what tangible economic or democratic reforms has the Government of Egypt undertaken as a result of the billions of dollars that we have provided in nonsecurity assistance throughout the last decades? What have we received in exchange?

This brings to mind two lessons on the Lebanese debacle that we are currently facing. The first is that the elections themselves are meaningless unless they are supplemented with democratic institutions. Hezbollah's ascendance in Lebanon was facilitated by the failure of responsible nations to insist on changing a Syrian-dictated electoral law and subsequent regulation prior to holding elections in the aftermath of the 2005 Cedar Revolution. Clearer standards for participation in elections and institutions must be both articulated and implemented to ensure that destructive actors are not afforded the opportunity to hijack an incipient democratic process.

The second lesson is we cannot afford to continue to pursue a myopic, personality-based policy that relies on stability over institutional reform. In Lebanon, we had a short-term policy based on maintaining stability, and we vested significant political capital with both Rafiq Hariri and, in the wake of his assassination and ascendance of the pro-Western March 14 bloc, his son Saad Hariri. Basing the next round of elections on existing Egyptian law and regulations without clear standards for participation and a democratic institutional framework is a recipe for disaster.

And turning lastly to the role of the Egyptian Army, it has been reported that the United States is working behind the scenes to impress upon the Egyptian military the need to protect protestors and support a peaceful government transition. And I will be asking you questions on the administration's view on the security assistance to Egypt.

So thank you very much for being here.

And I am so proud and pleased to turn to my ranking member, Mr. Berman of California.

[The prepared statement of Chairman Ros-Lehtinen follows:]

CHAIRMAN ILEANA ROS-LEHTINEN
Opening Statement
"Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon:
Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 2"
Thursday, February 10, 2011

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Has the State Department evaluated whether Lebanon now meets the statutory definition of a state-sponsor of terrorism or terrorist sanctuary given Hezbollah's control of that government? What is the Administration's stance on continuing to provide assistance to such a Lebanese government? From Lebanon to Egypt, what is the Administration's stance on the Muslim Brotherhood? Beyond the general parameters referenced in Deputy Secretary Steinberg's written statement, what are the specific components and contingencies of the U.S. strategy toward Egypt and for aiding the transitional process? If a key U.S. goal is to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from taking over and the Muslim Brotherhood is well-funded, then shouldn't U.S. policy seek to shift economic aid away from the Mubarak government and focus it on strengthening responsible, peaceful, democratic voices?

The Administration's initial approach to Egypt was clearly not keeping up with these priorities. In its first year, while driving increases in the International Affairs Budget, the Administration made significant cuts to total bilateral funding for democracy and governance programming. USAID even reportedly adopted a policy of only funding those organizations officially approved as NGOs by the Mubarak government. Repeated U.S. failure to enforce its own conditions and requirements on non-security assistance to Egypt has compounded this problem.

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The second lesson is we cannot afford to continue to pursue a myopic, personality-based policy that relies on "stability" over institutional reform. In Lebanon, we had a short-term policy based on maintaining "stability," and we invested significant political capital with both Rafik Hariri, and -- in the wake of his assassination and ascendance of the pro-Western March 14th bloc -- his son, Saad Hariri.

Basing the next round of elections on existing Egyptian law and regulations without clear standards for participation and a democratic institutional framework is a recipe for disaster.

Turning to the role of the Egyptian Army, it has been reported that the U.S. is working behind the scenes to impress upon the Egyptian military the need to protect protesters and support a peaceful government transition. What is the Administration's view on continuing security assistance to Egypt for stability and compliance with its international commitments and preparation for democratic transition, and

simultaneously *transferring* economic aid currently going to the Mubarak government to pro-democracy groups for organizing and preparing for elections?

The U.S. response to developments in Lebanon and Egypt have serious implications for Jordan, our vital ally Israel, and our efforts against al-Qaeda in Yemen and beyond.

In closing, I would ask Deputy Secretary Steinberg to elaborate on, not just the country-specific policies, but the Administration's broader regional strategy.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you very much, Madam Chairman.

I am just getting word that probably a lot of people are getting that—except possibly the Deputy Secretary of State—that according to NBC News and a number of other sources, including quotes from the new Prime Minister of Egypt, that Hosni Mubarak is to step down following an all-day meeting of the country's Supreme Military Council. The army said all of the protestors demands would be met and a further statement was expected to be made later Thursday clarifying the situation. Mubarak was also due to address the nation.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. If I can interrupt. We will start your time again.

The Chair would like to remind the audience members that no disturbance of the committee proceedings are allowed, and if there is no order, we will ask for you to be removed from the room according to House rules.

Mr. Berman's time will now begin.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Yesterday I made a fairly detailed opening statement on the rapidly evolving events in Egypt as well as developments in Lebanon. Today I would like to focus on just one aspect, the most immediately relevant aspect of the democratic transition in Egypt, and that is the issue of when that transition will actually begin. We may have just had an answer on that.

But on February 1, President Obama said that a transition in Egypt must be meaningful, peaceful and begin now. At this point, however, prior to my reading about this, I felt that we were still waiting for that beginning. There have been some important announcements, the decision that neither Hosni Mubarak, Gamal Mubarak, nor Omar Suleiman would run for the Presidency in September, but nothing meaningful up until now has actually happened, nothing that could be considered a break with business as usual as seen by the Egyptian regime.

Madam Chairman, the transition needs substance. If current Egyptian leaders are reluctant to give it that substance, then the administration needs to give it a major push by setting out its own timetables and targets. The transition needs to be orderly, to be sure, but foremost it actually needs to happen.

Both the regime and the opposition need to see defining actions so that each begins to make what President Obama called the psychological break from the past. Any number of tangible actions would serve that purpose, whether it be ending the emergency law, the decision by President Mubarak to hand over effective power to his Vice President, a decision by the regime to bring credible opposition members into a transition government, clear indications that a new Constitution will be written and implemented and will ensure the provision of free and fair elections, the ability of secular parties to organize, the presence of monitors, the presence of international observers, and the kind of both print and television freedom that allows all parties and all voices to be heard during that kind of a campaign.

This type of concrete action needs to happen for many reasons, but primarily for the benefit of the Egyptian people. The Egyptian regime needs to know that it cannot dawdle or simply go through

the motions of democratic change without any intention of genuinely transitioning to democracy. If delay is its tactic, it will reap a whirlwind at home, and it will leave Congress little choice but to take action. In other words, no slow walking.

When this crisis broke out, I emphasized that I favored continuing our security assistance program, but the duration of that program depended on whether the military played a constructive role in the democratic transition. That is still my position. But our patience, mine, that of my colleagues, has limits. Given the military's influence over the regime, a regime that was born in the military and whose entire leadership is composed of military men, the democratic transition will happen if and only if the military plays that constructive role.

So, Mr. Secretary, we are very glad to see you here. We have great respect for what you have been doing in a number of areas, but I am hoping when we finish this hearing, we will have a sense from you of when you think the democratic transition in Egypt will begin—it may have been helped by some of this news—and how we know it has begun, and what our administration intends to do to make sure that it begins if not now, then very, very soon.

Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Berman.

And I am pleased to yield 3½ minutes to the chairman of our Middle East Subcommittee, Mr. Chabot.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chairman. Thank you for holding these timely and important hearings again today.

I look forward to hearing from our distinguished guest Secretary Steinberg about the situation in the Middle East, which continues to unfold even as we speak, as the ranking member indicated, with the news on Mubarak today.

I think it is safe to say that the developments that continue to sweep across the Middle East and North Africa really did surprise many, but for years analysts had called attention to the ills of the region—a lack of respect for even the most basic human rights in many instances, like freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, and fair and free elections—as a potentially dangerous source of discontent, but it was ignored. They pointed to the widespread poverty and the aggressive economic policies instituted by dictators who were out of touch with the plights of their respective populations.

They did not, however, predict that one 26-year-old street vendor's desperate act of defiance would initiate a wave of antiregime protests that are shaking the very foundations of the political order in the Middle East. Even those countries in which protests have not yet erupted look at countries like Egypt, Tunisia and Jordan, nervously wondering if they themselves will be next.

For years we have also been told something else. We have been told that the Middle East is a region that is not ready for democracy. Indeed, save a handful of exceptions, the democracy deficit in the region had all become but a permanent assumption upon which far too much U.S. policy was based. I say "had" because over the past weeks, the people of the Middle East by taking to the streets, have proclaimed loudly to the leaders and to the world that they share the same principles that we cherish. They have told us that

the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness does not stop at the water's edge.

While these developments are very exciting, there is a dark side, which is a cause for concern. The specter of radical Islamist groups which exploit every opportunity to seize power is lost on no one. In Egypt, for over 30 years President Mubarak has crushed every moderate secular political party that could pose a challenge to his party, the National Democratic Party. The only movement which managed to survive is the Muslim Brotherhood, which, among other aspirations, has declared its desire to reconsider Egypt's peace treaty with Israel as well as its desire to impose Sharia law on the Egyptian population.

President Mubarak, however repressive he may have been, was a close ally to the United States in the region and was especially helpful to us in fighting the global war on terror. In his absence, and as Egypt enters a period of transition, we must do all that we can to ensure that Egypt emerges from its current crisis with strong and democratic institutions of government, institutions that will respect the rights of women, uphold past treaties and agreements like those with our ally Israel, and not exploit the pillars of democratic governments like elections to assume the power only to abolish those very pillars. We must do all we can to help support the development of these institutions and to avoid one man, one vote, one time.

Preventing the Muslim Brotherhood from coming to power must be a leading priority as we revisit our policy toward Egypt. The quiet diplomacy that the United States has been engaging in so far may be helpful in dealing with the Mubarak regime, but it does nothing to assure the people of Egypt that we sympathize with their cause. As one of our witnesses yesterday pointed out, many Egyptians are totally unaware of the nonmilitary aid that we have given them.

So again, I commend you, Madam Chair, for holding this hearing. We obviously want to avoid a situation in which the Egyptian population looks at us as having bankrolled President Mubarak while completely ignoring them.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

And the ranking member, Mr. Ackerman, for 3½ minutes.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Until recently, and unlike its Arab neighbors, Lebanon had a democratically elected government that should have had a mandate to govern, but like all of its regional neighbors except Israel, Lebanon has suffered from a powerful and unaccountable element of its society acting above and beyond the law.

What was different in the Lebanese case was that this unaccountable few didn't occupy or use the institutions of the state in order to coerce, in order to repress, in order to dominate their political opponents. Instead, they just threatened them and then killed them.

No one should forget that before the current crisis, before the insurrection of May 2008, before the Presidential succession crisis and the lockout of Parliament, Hezbollah and its Iranian and Syrian allies engaged in a campaign of assassinations against Leba-

nese parliamentarians and journalists that began in 2005 with the murder of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri.

Long before the recent backroom coup, Hezbollah set itself above the law and outside the reach of the government. Hezbollah has for years systematically weakened Lebanon's Government and continually undermined Lebanon's sovereignty. It has made Lebanon a regional time bomb by deploying more than 40,000 Syrian and Iranian artillery rockets and advanced surface-to-surface missiles all aimed at Israel and all in order to shield Iran's illicit nuclear weapons program.

Tragically, the people of Lebanon are now hostages. Like the captive nations of Eastern Europe during the Cold War, their hearts are free, but their government has colluded with a foreign power to put them in chains.

The United States must continue to advocate for Lebanon's sovereignty and for the restoration of a legitimate government. We must continue to support and sustain the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and keep faith with all of the Lebanese people who want justice for their murdered countrymen and their former Prime Minister. America must continue to insist on the implementation of all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and we must speak out clearly against the flood of illegal and destabilizing Syrian and Iranian arms going into Lebanon.

And finally, we need to be clear with the Government of Lebanon that it bears the burden of demonstrating that it truly serves the people of Lebanon, and that it will keep peace inside Lebanon and on Lebanon's borders, and that it is not and will not either be a flunky for the ayatollahs in Tehran or for the dictator in Damascus. Until there is clear evidence that Beirut has made these choices, I believe we have no other alternative but to suspend all of our assistance programs to Lebanon. We have many urgent priorities in the Middle East. Helping Iran, helping Syria, and helping Hezbollah maintain a facade of Lebanese independence is not one of them.

Thank you, Madam Chair. I yield back the balance.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

The Chair is now pleased to welcome our witness. James B. Steinberg is the Deputy Secretary of State, serving as the principal deputy to Secretary Clinton. Appointed by President Obama, he was confirmed by the Senate on January 28, 2009, and sworn in by the Secretary the next day.

Prior to his appointment in the Obama administration, Mr. Steinberg served as the dean of the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs and the vice president and director of the foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institute.

From December 1996 to August 2000, Mr. Steinberg served as Deputy National Security Advisor to President Bill Clinton. Mr. Steinberg also has held numerous other posts in the State Department and on Capitol Hill.

Deputy Secretary Steinberg, thank you for attending, and I would kindly remind you to keep your oral testimony to no more than 5 minutes. And without objection, your written statement will be inserted into the record.

Welcome.

STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE JAMES B. STEINBERG, DEPUTY SECRETARY, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Madam Chairman. And let me begin on behalf of Secretary Clinton to congratulate you on taking the gavel here and to express how much we look forward to working with you and Ranking Member Berman and all of the members of the committee, and express appreciation for holding this timely hearing.

Last month in Doha, Secretary Clinton challenged the leaders of the Middle East to give greater voice to their people. As the region confronts a potent combination of demographic and technological changes, rampant unemployment, and in too many cases the denial of universal rights and freedoms, she warned the status quo was unsustainable.

In recent weeks this dynamic has given rise to demonstrations across the region and changes in Tunisia, Jordan, and Yemen, and, of course, sparked the dramatic developments in Egypt that, along with the events in Lebanon, are the focus of today's hearing.

In such an environment, it is more important than ever that America works both with the people and the governments to democratize and open up political systems, economies, and societies. As the Secretary said just a few days ago in Munich, these are her words, "This is not simply a matter of idealism. This is strategic necessity."

Change will emerge differently in response to different circumstances across the region, but our policies and our partnerships are guided by a few consistent principles. We stand for universal values, including freedom of association, assembly, and speech. We oppose violence as a tool for political coercion, and we have spoken out on the need for meaningful change in response to the demands of the people.

American administrations of both parties have been conveying this message to Arab leaders publicly and privately for many years, and have also sought cooperation on crucial priorities such as counterterrorism, Iran's nuclear program, and the peace process. But these are not mutually exclusive or even contradictory. Recent events have reinforced the fact that absent freedom and democratic progress, the public support needed to sustain progress on common goals cannot be achieved. Changes must come, but we must be mindful the transitions can lead to chaos and new forms of intolerance or backslide into authoritarianism.

We are working wherever we can to ensure that political transitions are deliberate, inclusive and transparent, and we expect all who take part to honor certain basic commitments, because, as President Obama said in his Cairo speech, elections alone do not make true democracy.

One constant in a changing region is unwavering support for Israel's security. We continue to believe that the best path to long-term security for Israel and the region is the committed pursuit of comprehensive peace. By working for orderly transitions, we believe we can help ensure Israel's long-term security, and we will be vigilant against attempts to hijack the legitimate impetus for domestic reform to advance extremism.

Egypt today is undergoing a remarkable transition, and given Egypt's leadership and influence, its peace with Israel, and our long-standing partnership, the stakes are high. We have all been transfixed by the heroic images from Tahrir Square of young and old, rich and poor, Muslim and Christian, gathering to lay claim to universal rights enjoyed in democratic societies around the world. And as the President has said, Egypt is not going back to the way it was.

We have declared publicly and privately that a peaceful, orderly, and prompt transition must begin without delay, and it must make immediate, irreversible progress toward free and fair elections.

We set out key principles to ensure that the transition remains peaceful. We made clear our support for human rights, including expression, association and assembly, freedom of the press. We have condemned violence against peaceful protestors, reporters and human rights activists, and we have underlined the need for Egypt's military to remain a force for stability. We are urging Egypt's Government and opposition to engage in serious, inclusive negotiations to arrive at a timetable, game plan, and path to constitutional political reforms. And as they do, we will support principles, processes, and institutions, not personalities. The desire for an orderly transition may not be a pretext for backsliding and stalling.

Another vital message we are sending to all who take part in Egypt's political future is the fundamental need to honor Egypt's historic peace treaty with Israel. As Egypt builds democratic institutions after the recent unrest and also contends with the economic challenges that helped to cause it, we will continue to extend a hand in partnership and friendship to the American people, and we will act now, as we have done in the past, to support civil society, nongovernmental organizations, democracy groups, and economic recovery. As the transition unfolds, we will tailor our support to engage and nurture it.

In Lebanon, a very different situation is unfolding. Last month Hezbollah, backed by Syria, used threats of violence to undermine the collapse of the Lebanese Government. We have worked with the international community with one voice to urge the next Lebanese Government to support the Special Tribunal, to honor its international obligations, and refrain from retribution against former officials.

We intend to judge the next Lebanese Government by its deeds, mindful of the circumstances that brought it about. We will be watching Prime Minister Mikati to see whether he makes good on his public pledge to build a broad-based government that represents all sections of Lebanese society. The Lebanese people deserve better than a false choice between justice for the murder of their Prime Minister and stability for their country.

If I could just conclude, Madam Chairman, by observing, without commenting specifically on the recent reports that you have referenced, that what is critical as we see this unfolding dynamic is that we remain consistent in our principles and the values of interest that we bring forward, while remaining nimble to adapt to emerging circumstances. It is a little bit like having a good game plan for the game, but also knowing when to call an audible. And

I think that is what we are seeing as we go forward here, a consistent approach that identifies U.S. interests and values, but adapts to the circumstances and preserves our long-term interests.

And I look forward to your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Steinberg follows:]

TESTIMONY
DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE JAMES B STEINBERG
HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
"RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT AND LEBANON:
IMPLICATIONS FOR BROADER US POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST"
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2011

A Region in Flux

Madam Chairman, I congratulate you on taking the gavel. Secretary Clinton and I look forward to working closely with you, Ranking Member Berman, and all of the members of this Committee to promote U.S. leadership and security in a changing world.

Last month in Doha, Secretary Clinton challenged the leaders of the Middle East to give greater voice to their people. She warned that the status quo is unsustainable. The Middle East today confronts a potent combination of demographic and technological changes, rampant unemployment, and—in too many cases—the denial of universal rights and freedoms.

In recent weeks, this dynamic has given rise to demonstrations across the region; the overthrow of a decades-old regime in Tunisia; a new cabinet in Jordan; a declaration from Yemen's President that he will not seek additional terms in office; and of course the dramatic developments in Egypt that—along with events in Lebanon—are the focus of today's hearing.

In such an environment, it is more important than ever that U.S. policy focus on working with with both people and governments to democratize and open up political systems, economies, and societies. As the Secretary said in Munich, this is "not simply a matter of idealism. It is a strategic necessity."

Change will emerge differently in response to different circumstances across the region, but our policies and our partnerships are guided by a few consistent principles. We stand for universal values including freedom of association, assembly, and speech. We oppose violence as a tool for political coercion—either to perpetuate the status quo or to change it. And we have spoken out on the need for meaningful change in response to the demands of the people for progress toward fair, responsive, and democratic governance.

This has been a message that U.S. administrations of both parties have been conveying to Arab leaders, publicly and privately, for many years—a message backed by programs and grants for activists and civil society organizations across the region. It hasn't, of course, been our only message. These same administrations have also sought cooperation on crucial priorities such as countering violent extremism, curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions, and bringing comprehensive regional peace to the Middle East. But these are not mutually exclusive or even contradictory. The events of the last few weeks have reinforced the fact that, absent freedom and democratic progress, the public support and inherent legitimacy needed to progress on other common goals cannot be sustained. The status quo is not stable, nor is it sustainable.

Therefore, changes must come. At the same time, we must be mindful of the challenges that come with transitions. They can lead to chaos and new forms of intolerance, or backslide into authoritarianism. We want to create durable democracies, which is why we are working, wherever we can, to ensure that political transitions are deliberate, inclusive, and transparent. We expect all who take part in such transitions to honor certain basic commitments, including a spirit of tolerance and compromise, respect for the rights of minorities, and a commitment to hold power through consent rather than coercion. As President Obama said in his historic 2009 Cairo address, "Without those ingredients, elections alone do not make true democracy." At the same time, we also expect the process of reform to move forward promptly – justice and democracy deferred will be justice and dignity denied.

One constant in a changing region is our unwavering support for Israel's security. We continue to believe that the best path to the long-term security of Israel and the stability of the region is the committed pursuit of comprehensive peace — peace through a two-state solution with the Palestinians, peace with Syria and Lebanon, and full normalization of relations with all of Israel's neighbors. As the recent Quartet statement of the United Nations, Russia, the European Union, and the United States made clear, at a moment of upheaval across the region, serious negotiations toward peace remain essential. Where Israel has already made peace, we will work with focus and vigor to preserve and deepen it and to make clear that we count on governments that have made peace with Israel to sustain their commitments. We are committed to ensuring that political changes on Israel's borders do not create new dangers for Israel or the region. By working for orderly transitions, we believe we can help ensure Israel's long-term security just as we can support governments that are more responsive to their people. We will be vigilant against attempts to hijack the legitimate impetus for domestic reform to advance extremism that would set back the cause of both universal rights and regional stability.

These principles guide our approach and our policies throughout the region.

Egypt

Egypt today is undergoing a remarkable transition. And given Egypt's leadership and influence, its three decades of peace with Israel, and our deep and longstanding partnership, the stakes are high.

All of us have been transfixed by the images from Tahrir Square of Egyptians, young and old, rich and poor, Muslim and Christian, gathering to lay claim to rights enjoyed in democratic societies around the world—rights that they are demanding, rightfully, for themselves.

As the President has said, Egypt is not going back to the way it was. We have declared publicly and privately that a peaceful, orderly, and meaningful transition must begin without delay. And it must make immediate and irreversible progress toward free and fair elections that respect the rights and reflect the will and aspirations of the Egyptian people.

We have set out key principles —publicly and privately— to ensure that the transition remains peaceful. We made clear our support for universal human rights for the Egyptian people, including freedom of expression, association, assembly, religion, and communication; freedom

of the press; and free access to information. Suppression is not going to be a solution to the challenges facing Egypt. We have condemned violence, including violence against peaceful protestors, reporters, and human rights activists and called for those who have committed abuses to be held accountable. We have urged an end to the harassment and detention of political prisoners. And we have underlined the need for Egypt's military to protect the people of Egypt, and to remain a force for calm.

Our strategic partnership with Egypt is deep and longstanding. We want to continue and strengthen our partnership with the people of Egypt to ensure a timely, broad-based, and meaningful transition to free and fair elections and durable, sustainable democracy. In that spirit, we are reaching out to a wide range of governmental and nongovernmental actors to help Egyptians turn this moment of uncertainty into a moment of opportunity. And we are urging Egypt's government, opposition, and civil society to engage in serious and inclusive negotiations to arrive at a timetable, game plan, and pathway to constitutional and political reforms.

The Egyptian government has stated its commitment to a serious dialogue and free and fair elections. But these words must be backed by action that demonstrates their seriousness. More concrete steps are needed to set the tone for a meaningful and orderly transition—including the repeal of Egypt's state of emergency and new laws to permit political parties to form and participate. We will be vigilant in ensuring that the desire for an orderly transition not be a pretext for backsliding and stalling.

Ultimately, Egypt's future must be in the hands of its people. They are the ones who will have to reach the agreements that move their country's political life forward. We will support principles, processes, and institutions—not personalities. We are hopeful that Egyptians can lay the groundwork not just to elect new leaders, but to reform laws, strengthen liberties, build institutions, and respect the rights of religious minorities and women. All must be part of a new political life and pluralistic process in Egypt.

Another vital message we are sending to all who take part in shaping Egypt's political future is the fundamental need to respect the Camp David Accords and to honor Egypt's historic peace treaty with Israel. This is critical for the region, for our partnership, and especially for Egypt which we want to continue to exhibit responsible regional leadership. The internal challenges that Egypt faces today make continued stability on its borders all the more important –and fulfillment of its international obligations— all the more important.

Egypt will have to build democratic institutions after the recent unrest—and also contend with the economic challenges that helped to cause it. And as they do, the United States will continue to extend the hand of partnership and friendship to the Egyptian people. We should act now—as we have done in the past—to support civil society, non-governmental organizations, democracy groups and economic recovery. As the transition unfolds, we will tailor support to engage and nurture it.

Finally, many Members of Congress have spoken to the Department about the welfare of citizens from your districts. I want to take a moment to acknowledge the heroic efforts of those State Department and USAID employees who are in Egypt and on our Egypt Task Force in

Washington. Our diplomats have worked around the clock even as their own families were evacuated. Sometimes we talk abstractly about the importance of investing in our diplomats and embassies. But there is nothing abstract about what these tireless men and women have done to protect and evacuate more than 2300 U.S. citizens from Egypt during the unrest. They deserve our recognition and our thanks.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, a very different situation is unfolding. Last month, Hizballah, backed by Syria, used threats of violence to undermine the government of Prime Minister Saad Hariri and ultimately force its collapse. This political intimidation runs contrary to Lebanon's sovereignty and to the rule of law. We have worked with the international community to speak with one voice as we urge the next Lebanese government to support the Special Tribunal for Lebanon; to honor its international obligations including the letter and spirit of UN Security Council Resolutions 1559 and 1701; and to refrain from retribution against former or current officials.

We intend to judge the next Lebanese government by its deeds. We will be watching Prime Minister-designate Mikati to see whether he makes good on his public pledge to build a broad-based government that represents all sections of Lebanese society. His efforts to maintain stability on Lebanon's border with Israel will be another crucial factor in the evolution of the U.S.-Lebanese bilateral relationship.

The Lebanese people deserve better than a false choice between justice for the murder of their former Prime Minister and stability for their country. The truth is that lasting peace and stability depend on ending impunity for political assassinations that no country should be forced to tolerate. We will continue to support the Tribunal as it brings its work to a conclusion. And we expect Lebanon's leaders to make it clear that they seek a future free of outside influence or pressure.

As the shape of Lebanon's transition becomes clearer, we will be in a better position to discuss the future of our assistance to Lebanon. One lesson from Egypt is that strong ties with a professional military can be a stabilizing force, a source of influence, and—in Lebanon's case—a bulwark against malign outside interference. We have made significant gains in our engagement with both the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Lebanese Internal Security Forces. And we remain committed to the goals of Resolution 1701, including the establishment of the LAF as the sole armed force in Lebanon. The fact that we continue to plan for assistance through FY2012 is an incentive to the next Lebanese government to protect the LAF's independence as a national institution serving all Lebanese, but we will follow developments closely in connection with our future support. In the short term, we continue to monitor our end-use agreements to ensure that no weapons are diverted from the Lebanese Armed Forces, which continues to maintain an excellent end-use record.

Jordan and Tunisia

The need for reform extends to all countries across the region. Like many of its neighbors, our ally Jordan has experienced some peaceful demonstrations. Earlier this month, King Abdullah

appointed a new Prime Minister with a mandate to enact swift and sweeping reforms. The King has already met with Jordanian opposition leaders and instructed the incoming Prime Minister to work toward an inclusive government. We look forward to working with Jordan's new government and the Jordanian people to help them deliver reform and results.

Tunisia, where the current wave of democratic protests began, will also serve as an important test case. All of us were inspired by the courage of Tunisians determined to bring about political change. Now, the people and leaders of the region are watching closely to see how Tunisia navigates the challenging transition to democratic governance. We fully support this effort.

A credible electoral process is a vital next step in addressing grievances and bringing lasting stability to Tunisia. We are working with a range of actors across the Tunisian political spectrum and civil society to help lay the groundwork for free and fair elections, significant political and legal reform, vibrant political parties, and a free media as the country shapes and plans for a democratic future.

In cases like Tunisia's, where events are changing rapidly, we are able to respond and develop plans because we have resources available in our global democracy funds, in the Middle East Partnership Initiative, and in the Complex Crises Fund. We are evaluating the current scope of our assistance to Tunisia so that we can respond effectively to possible requests from the Tunisian government to help it follow through on its promises for political and economic reform. We will continue to consult with Congress as events in Tunisia unfold.

Conclusion

In the last month, the Middle East has experienced momentous change driven by a fundamental yearning for the same opportunities and values that have served us as a nation since our founding. We will need to provide support for democratic transitions in Egypt, Tunisia, and across the region. We must make sure that we have the tools to deliver support to civil society and democratic institutions appropriate to this new opportunity. Many of the region's leaders have promised important reforms. In many cases, we have the capacity to help them keep their commitments. And where real political change begins to take root, we must be ready to support it.

It will be up to the people of the region to choose their future. But we can—and will—partner with all who renounce violence, respect the rights of others, including minorities, and seek our help to lay the groundwork for more prosperous, democratic, and peaceful societies. Meeting these challenges demands a close and ongoing partnership with Congress as well. I thank you for inviting me here today. I look forward to your questions.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so very much, sir.

And before yielding my time to Congresswoman Buerkle, I wanted to bring to your attention, sir, a problem that we had regarding the YouCut debate on the floor yesterday not related to the subject of this morning's hearing.

But yesterday morning, less than 2 hours before floor consideration, we received a letter from the State Department opposing the YouCut proposal to instruct the U.N. to return $179 million to the United States because of overpayments we had made to the U.N. Tax Equalization Fund, a surplus that the U.N. itself admitted that was payable to the United States.

Your Department's letter stated for the first time ever that the current TEF surplus is now approximately 80 million, so there is a discrepancy there. So if it is true, that means the Department of State had already given away $100 million owed back to the U.S. taxpayers. And we have been asking for this information for the past 3 months and have been stonewalled by the State Department. The U.N. cannot redirect this surplus fund without instructions from the United States.

So I have some questions that I would like to get written responses from you by Thursday, February 17, about how this was handled, because the way that this matter was handled raises serious concerns in my mind about the management and the candor of the Department of State. So I would appreciate it when my staff hands you that letter, if we could get that written response.

Mr. STEINBERG. I would be happy to provide that.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, sir.

I am so pleased to yield to Congresswoman Buerkle of New York, who serves on the Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade as the vice chair.

Ms. BUERKLE. Thank you, Madam Chairman, and thank you for the opportunity this morning to address Mr. Steinberg.

Mr. Steinberg, thank you for being here this morning.

Throughout the course of the opening statements, we have heard from many of the members talking about the concern that the Muslim Brotherhood will step in if and when President Mubarak steps down. And really the key being is this something that the administration is making a priority of, preventing the Muslim Brotherhood from stepping in when that void occurs? And then beyond that, if it is a priority, what is the strategy of this administration to prevent that from happening?

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you very much for the question.

I think that what we have focused on is some set of principles that we apply to what we expect to happen during this transition, because as I said, we recognize that these transitions can be difficult, and they can lead to unpredictable results. And so by focusing on those expectations and conditions, the need for an inclusive process that respects not only the need for elections, but also the institutions that protects the rights of minorities, that makes sure that, as things move forward, that individuals of different religions, of different perspectives are allowed to be part of the process is quite critical. And we want to make sure that the process is not hijacked by extremists or those who do not deeply believe in the open and tolerant and democratic process that we want.

The process itself is one for the Egyptians to decide, but as we engage with whatever government emerges there, we will be guided by those principles.

Ms. BUERKLE. If you could, Mr. Steinberg, can you elaborate a little bit on this inclusive process, some of the specifics, the strategy that the administration will put forward?

Mr. STEINBERG. Again, I think what is important is that this be a process that is driven by the Egyptians themselves. But what we made clear to the Government of Egypt is that we expect that the full range of voices, not ones that are simply friendly to the government itself, are allowed to participate, and particularly the voices of the individuals who have been protesting peacefully on the street and are asking for democratic change are brought in and that different voices are heard, that legitimate perspectives from civil society participate in these discussions. The format is one that the Egyptian people themselves have to develop. But that is the kind of approach that we support.

Ms. BUERKLE. And if I may just follow up with that. How do you anticipate the United States of America being engaged in that process? How do you see that unfolding? Where will you be involved in the process?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think our first role has been to support those voices, and we have done that through our assistance programs. I think that it is important to recognize, as a number of others have raised this question, that we have a variety of ways of being involved in supporting civil society voices, and that while there has been a focus on some of our assistance programs under the ESF, there are other programs through our democracy programs and through our Middle East Peace Initiative and metric programs that we have other ways of supporting these democratic voices, which we have done.

So we want to support them and give them the capacity to participate effectively, and then we want to make clear in our advocacy with the Egyptian Government that these are voices that need to be heard. But I think it is not for the United States to be in the meetings themselves. We want this to be a process that is driven by the Egyptian people, by the legitimate forces in Egyptian society.

Ms. BUERKLE. One last question. Do you believe if you follow this process that you just outlined for us that that will be sufficient for the United States—or to keep the Muslim Brotherhood from stepping in? Is that going to be a sufficient strategy to prevent that from happening?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think the key here, as I said in my opening remarks, is to have a clear set of principles which says what we expect and what, from our perspective, is an acceptable outcome for a new government moving forward, not just for our interests, although our interests are critical here, but also for the interests of the Egyptian people, and then to judge that as events emerge. And I think we need to, rather than trying to anticipate potential outcomes, be adaptive enough and responsive enough so we recognize, as we say, so we can identify concerns as they emerge, be vigilant, and make sure there we flag potentially dangerous emerging trends.

And I think that is what we have tried to do here, which is part of the reason why we focused on the need for an orderly process, to make sure that it is not hijacked by voices which in the name of democracy are going to set up an intolerant regime.

Ms. BUERKLE. Thank you, Mr. Steinberg.

I yield back, Madam Chairman.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Congressman.

I am pleased to yield to my friend, the ranking member, Mr. Berman of California.

Mr. BERMAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

And thank you, Secretary Steinberg, for your testimony and your leadership here.

I would like to follow up on Ms. Buerkle's initial question: What is the administration's position regarding the participation of the Muslim Brotherhood in the transition and then subsequent governance? I certainly agree that in the end the Egyptian people are going to decide this question.

There is an article in the current Egyptian Constitution requiring that religion be kept out of politics. Turkey has had a similar provision in its Constitution.

Does the administration have a view as to whether Egypt should retain that principle in the next phase of its governance?

Mr. STEINBERG. Mr. Berman, I think what is important is that the next government respect the kind of democratic principles that we talked about, which is a commitment to democracy, but not just for one election, but for all of the fabric of democracy. Open institutions. Open debate. Tolerance of diversity and religious minorities. An ability of people to pursue different paths free of harassment. A recognition that you have to have a vibrant civil society.

There are different ways the Constitutions can embody that, different ways in which countries allow religion to play a role in our lives. We know, for example, even in our friends and allies in Europe, some have roles for religion in societies.

So I think you can't have an absolute rule about exactly how that applies, but it is very clear that we need to have—and we will be clear in our own mind that allowing this to become a state or a government that is intolerant, that does not provide an opportunity for the free, full expression of religious rights, of minority rights, or freedom for all of the different voices in Egyptian society is very important.

And what is encouraging is if you look at the people who are out in Tahrir Square, what you are seeing is exactly that, Christians and Muslims, people from different religions and backgrounds and different viewpoints on the role of Islam in society. And that is what needs to be preserved, and that is something that we feel would be important in any Constitution that would be adopted by a future government.

Mr. BERMAN. I have supported the administration's decision not to suspend the assistance program up until now, but I noticed that White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs back on January 28 said the United States will be reviewing our Egypt assistance posture based on events that take place in the coming days.

Is that review ongoing, and what is the nature of that review? Under what circumstances would the administration consider suspending aid to Egypt?

And then just an observation that I would recommend that the administration look toward the whole issue of export controls on things like tear gas canisters, items that are mostly relevant to the suppression of peaceful protestors. I think there would be some value in reviewing and perhaps eliminating licenses on those kinds of items for the interim period.

Mr. STEINBERG. Mr. Berman, I think you would expect and we do always keep under constant review our assistance programs not just for Egypt, but elsewhere. Congressman Ackerman raised concerns about Lebanon, and I want to assure him that we do the same there because we have to be able to be responsive to ongoing events. And I won't suggest that there aren't some circumstances where events may arrive where we would have to change our approach, but what we have focused on here as events have been emerging in Egypt is how to encourage this transition, how to use our influence to try to move the process in a direction that we would like to see it go and it meets the needs and wishes of the Egyptian people. And I think we have to be prepared to deal with events as they emerge, but we don't want to try to anticipate bad outcomes in a way that would make it less likely to achieve.

Mr. BERMAN. I agree with that. I just in the end don't want the notion of the ensurance of that assistance become a basis for the slow walking of the orderly transition.

One last question. With all of the focus on Egypt, I just want—I would like you to take one moment to sort of discuss how the situation may be affecting situations outside of Egypt, such as Iran. And my specific question is whether the State Department is on track to make determinations on their investigations for those violating CISADA, our Iran sanctions legislation, next month.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, as you know, this is an issue that I spent a lot of time on. And the Secretary has asked me to put a lot of specific attention to make sure that we have a very vigorous implementation of CISADA. We think it has been an enormously helpful tool, and it has had enormous impact in helping us to galvanize the international community to take steps to put additional pressure on Iran, and I think we have had enormous success. This continues in a comprehensive way to affect Iran, the Iranian economy, and also keep in the sense of isolation.

So we understand the importance of making sure we have full enforcement on that. We have an ongoing effort that is looking at activities as they emerge, and I continue to pledge to you that we will do everything that we need to do both to enforce it, but also to use the statute in a broader way to engage with other countries to make clear that we need to remain vigilant not only about the letter of the law, but also the broader desire to make sure that we don't have companies trying to skirt those provisions.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

Now for the next round of questions. Mr. Smith, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights.

Mr. SMITH. Madam Chair, thank you very much.

Mr. Steinberg, welcome to the committee.

You know, he is the administration dictator until his utility and usefulness erodes or evaporates or diminishes, and then the administration finds its public voice on human rights and democracy and calls on the former friend to get out of town.

You mentioned, Mr. Steinberg, a moment ago about the consistency of principles, and I frankly have some concerns about that.

A few weeks ago, President Obama rolled out the red carpet as President Hu Jintao came into Washington, a brutal dictator who has murdered, tortured, and repressed countless Chinese, Tibetans, and Uighurs. The press conference with Hu Jintao was so disturbing—I watched it, and I couldn't believe my ears—and even the Washington Post wrote an editorial on January 19. It said, "President Obama makes Hu Jintao look good on rights."

The President defended his friend, his dictator friend, and said the Chinese had a "different culture," which I found to be an absolute insult to the Chinese people, especially those who are suffering in Lao Gai, who are being tortured for demanding their fundamental human rights.

He also said he had a different political system, as if that was a defense, and that is what the Washington Post picked up on. Yeah. It is a different system. It is a dictatorship.

My question is—you know, so I think we need to be very cautious, and I would respectfully submit to you be cautious when you talk about consistency and principles. Even Liu Xiaobo is languishing in prison, as we all know, right now. And then something was said behind the scenes. But we need public statements, not when it is—when that dictatorship is in its final hour, but consistently, and in a very transparent fashion, to let them know that we know.

I read all of the Chinese press after the fact on the People's Daily, at least what was carried there. They called Hu Jintao's trip to Washington a tour de force, that he just took over Washington, and we were sitting there enfeebled by the effort that we showed. So I am very concerned when you talk about consistency.

I do have a question about freedom of press and reporters in particular. Reporters Without Borders suggests that as many as 79 journalists have been attacked in Egypt, 76 detained, 1 has been killed. Do we know how high up in the command, whether or not the Army, whether or not the military, whether or not Mubarak, ordered that, or did it come from the Muslim Brotherhood, or was it just an outgrowth of the chaos of the day each day?

And secondly, I would like to ask about a very disturbing report that an American company, Narus, has sold the Egyptian Government what is called deep packet inspection technology, highly advanced technology that allows the purchaser to search the content of e-mails as they pass through the Internet routers. The report is from an NGO called Free Press, and it is based on information Narus itself has revealed about its business.

Now, there is no way of knowing whether the information the Egyptian Government gleaned from its Narus technology enabled it to identify, track down, and harass or detain some of the journalists or anybody else in Egypt.

I would like to know what we know about this company. And it is part of Boeing. It was recently bought. And what can you tell us about Narus and this invasion of privacy on the Internet?

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Congressman.

Obviously we had an extended conversation about China, which I would welcome the chance to discuss with you. But I just would make one point that in addition to the very public remarks that President Obama made, my boss, Secretary Clinton, made an extensive speech the week before President Hu came here in which she specifically identified our concerns about Liu Xiaobo and other specific dissidents and, I think, gave a very clear and very unequivocal statement about the importance that we attach to human rights in China.

So I certainly appreciate the importance of consistency, and I think it is something that we have made a part of our engagement with China.

With respect to the journalists, we have made clear we have many priorities that we are focusing on as this transition goes forward. But we have been explicitly very clear about the unacceptability about the way the journalists have been treated, the harassment, the imprisonment and the like.

I think it is difficult to know—to answer fully your question about who is behind it. What is encouraging, though, is that because of the intervention of us and others, the journalists have been released, and it is important that we keep a focus on that because it has been the critical voice that has kept public eyes and ears on that.

On your second question, obviously I am unfamiliar with the company that you identified, but I will be happy to see what we know about that.

Mr. SMITH. Could you dig into that and get back to the committee, because it is very important. It goes to the whole issue of increasingly that U.S. corporations are enabling dictatorships. We saw it in Iran with a German corporation. We have seen it in China. We have seen it in Belarus where the Internet was used and is used to track down dissidents, to invade their e-mails, find out who they are talking to. It is an awful tool of repression, and Narus, according to these reports, has been enabling that kind of invasion of privacy.

So thank you very much.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you. We would appreciate answers to that.

Mr. Ackerman, the ranking member of the Middle East Subcommittee.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Thank you very much.

Good to see you, Mr. Secretary.

Consistency is important, especially in foreign policy. A foolish consistency is something much to be avoided.

There is a question that keeps asking itself, and some of us are asking it, and it demands a real answer. We can agree on the principle of freedom of speech and freedom of communication, and we can agree how important it is to democratic and civil societies. But when you pose a question, that there is information out there that

is in a virus, would you say that that would be welcome in your computer if the purpose of the virus was to bring down the system?

My question is about the Muslim Brotherhood. They are an element of society for sure, and we have principles that all elements of societies are welcome, and everybody has a right to freedom of religion, and et cetera.

Now, I believe in treating my neighbor as myself, but that doesn't tell me that I should invite Jeffrey Dahmer to my house for dinner. Nothing good will come of that.

How do you form a government and welcome in as an element of it a party that would destroy the government itself and expect stability? This is a tough question, and we really have to think about it. In being civil and democratic and welcoming, we also have to avoid being foolish.

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Mr. Ackerman.

Obviously, this is an important question, and I will just make two observations. Which is, one, some of you know I am a lapsed lawyer, but I do remember from my constitutional law that even for free speech, there are limits to free speech. And we know we can't cry "fire" in a crowded theater and the like. Even in our own system, we recognize that speech has to support civil society and be part of that.

Mr. ACKERMAN. Are you saying that the Muslim Brotherhood is an exception?

Mr. STEINBERG. No. What I am saying is that if there were actual acts that were threatening to people, that that would not be acceptable. I want to make clear that we don't think that threatening acts of violence would be an acceptable form of speech. And I think that is why we made an important statement about the need for lack of violence.

But even more important, I think what we are focused on and you have raised the question is not so much the dialogue that is going on now, but what kind of government emerges once this transition takes place. And I think we have had a consistent record in saying that there are circumstances in which parties fail to respect democracy, fail to be an acceptable participant in government, that we could not be supportive of that happening. Obviously a very clear case of that is the Hamas and the Palestinian Authority. We made our position very clear on that.

I don't want to try to anticipate what is going to be the outcome of this process of democratization in Egypt, but I do think we will bring those same sets of principles together, which is that a government that will have our support is one that respects open society.

Mr. ACKERMAN. My concern is that we be as wise as we could be considering the alternatives.

Lebanon. What happens if the new Government of Lebanon rejects whatever the results of the tribunal might indicate?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think two points about this, which is, one, we attach enormous importance to the continuation of the tribunal, and we will do what we can to sustain that effort irrespective of what the decisions are of the Lebanese Government. It is our clear expectation that whatever government is formed, it meet its inter-

national obligations with respect to the tribunal, and that is what we will expect to hold them to. I think we——

Mr. ACKERMAN. If Lebanon pulls its financial support for the tribunals, some think it would collapse. Are we considering withholding aid from Lebanon?

Mr. STEINBERG. As I mentioned earlier in response to Mr. Berman's question, I think we obviously keep questions of assistance under review. Right now we are focusing on trying to encourage all of the parties, including the Prime Minister designate, to make sure we have an inclusive government that meets its obligations. So long as that continues, and at least up until now the tribunal has not been undermined, we are continuing our assistance. But obviously we will have to keep that under review and look at the circumstances as they emerge.

Mr. ACKERMAN. I thank the chair for the extension of time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Ackerman. Great questions.

So pleased to yield 5 minutes to the chair of the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, Mr. Chabot, for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHABOT. Thank you, Madam Chair.

Secretary, I have a number of questions. Some of them have already been talked about to some degree. But clearly we all want democracy. We want the people of Egypt to improve their conditions and their freedoms. Our overriding concern is that what we all want is going to end up with the folks that we—and I don't think the Egyptians themselves, the vast majority, want to be in control—and that is the Muslim Brotherhood or Islamic Jihadists or whatever terminology one wants to use.

They said a lot of things, and they are, I think, trying to portray themselves to some degree as being, well, we are more moderate now. And could you talk a little bit about Sharia law and what they said and what you really think their position is on that with respect to Egypt if they would gain control?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think there is a lot of speculation as to what their goals or objectives are, and I think I would prefer to leave that to the analysts.

What I would say from the perspective of the policymakers' point of view is that we have to be clear about what anybody joining the government would be expected to be committed to, and that commitment is to an open, tolerant society that allows for religious diversity, for differences of opinion; that doesn't undermine civil society; that supports an open discourse among all elements of society; and, rather than trying to anticipate what any particular member organization is, that we hold to those principles, and we certainly make clear to anybody who is joining a future government must commit themselves to those principles, and if they do not, then we would be clear about what our position is.

Mr. CHABOT. Do you know what they are saying about Sharia law at this point in time?

Mr. STEINBERG. I am familiar with their writings, and I think what we know is that there are different instances in which Sharia law has been used in different societies. Some have been tolerant; some have been very intolerant. And what we need to focus on is what will protect basic civil liberties, and will this next govern-

ment, and if this organization cannot support and subscribe to those things, we believe that it would be inconsistent with the very efforts that are going on right now.

Mr. CHABOT. You said some of them tolerant and some of them intolerant. Can you give me an example of tolerant Sharia law?

Mr. STEINBERG. What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that there are examples of where in domestic law like Sharia law has been a part of societies. But what we are focusing on is what political law is and what are the political circumstances under which a government should govern. And that government has to meet these basic principles that we are identifying.

So I think that is what we want to focus on: What are the political rights? What are the opportunities for the society? What are the opportunities for citizens to exercise their rights? What are the opportunities for religious minorities?

One of the strengths of Egyptian society is the fact that Christians play such an important role, and that there is a small Jewish community there and other religious minorities. So if Sharia law means no tolerance for that, then that would not be something that we support.

Mr. CHABOT. Let me ask you this on a different topic. Relative to the Turkish model, there are obviously some parallels and some differences between Turkey and Egypt, obviously, but in Turkey the military plays a particularly important stabilizing historic role there. What are the comparisons with that in Egypt, and are there differences?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think what has been encouraging, and I think it has been a positive aspect of our engagement, is that thus far as events have unfolded in Egypt, that the military has respected the right for peaceful assembly, and it has not tried to suppress the legitimate rights of people to express their views, to assemble and the like. And we would hope that in any society, any government that emerges in Egypt, that we would have the same commitment from the role of the military, which is to support legitimate constitutional human rights. And that is something that we would look to in any society to see that as the role of the military.

Mr. CHABOT. I have only got a short period of time. Let me comment on something that is kind of frustrating to the policymakers here in Washington, I am sure to the American people to some degree, and that is with the considerable resources that we have invested in those two countries, Egypt and Turkey, when you do public opinion polls of the people of those countries, the United States isn't particularly well thought of or popular. I don't know if you want to comment on that. I have been told that is because we are so close, that they expect more, et cetera, et cetera. Do you have any comment on that?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think it is a challenge to us, and I think it is an important challenge to us, because I think that it is critical as we go forward that we find ways to understand why that is and, to the extent that we can be consistent with our own principles and values, that we try to do that.

Now, obviously there may be circumstances in which we are unpopular for things that we believe in, and we will stand up for them. But I think if we can do a better job of communicating and

indicating that we do share the aspirations of people all around the world for a better life and better opportunity, that that is important, and it has been a major purpose of what Secretary Clinton has tried to do with the State Department.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

And I would like to recognize Mr. Gregory Meeks of New York for the next round of 5 minutes.

Thank you, Gregory.

Mr. MEEKS. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Good to see you, Mr. Secretary.

Let me ask this question. One of the things that I do get concerned about, and I know a lot of my colleagues, et cetera, and I talk about the Muslim Brotherhood, et cetera. However, if, in fact, we seem too heavy-handed, sometimes it is like the kid, the child; you tell them don't date this person, don't date that person, and they date the person just to spite you at times. I want to make sure that we don't get into that scenario. And I have tremendous faith in the Egyptian people from what I have seen thus far. They want freedom. They want to make sure that they have democracy, which they have been denied for 30 years.

That being said, what you don't want to happen is there to be a vacuum so that someone like the Brotherhood steps up. And what concerns me is with the opposition, and I don't know what leaders can evolve or will evolve because it seems as though they are leaderless. And when you begin these negotiations and conversations, you know, there has to be someone that is talking.

So I was just wondering, and I had asked this question yesterday, who are the leaders that we can expect to emerge, and is there anything that you can tell us about them, and can the protesters achieve their goals basically without a leader?

And so and I want to tie that in as quickly as I could to the fact that there was a lack of a clear leadership in the Tunisia revolution also. And how that is going because I am concerned about this—going to Tunisia real quickly about the assessments of a security situation there. There was some more violence this weekend, a protest, and in your view, what course of action toward holding the formal regimes internal security services accountable for past abuses would be conducive to a greater political openness without contributing to greater destabilization.

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Congressman. I think there are—and we shouldn't underestimate a lot of important and we well-respected civil society voices in Egypt from the NGOs, from legal professionals and the like who may well form a part of the future Egyptian Government. I think it is both difficult to prevent and not on a roll to sort of anoint individuals to be the ones. But I do think that that is why we so much have focused on urging Egyptian Government to create a process to allow these voices to come together, the wise men's group that is meeting and others, which do include a variety of well respected voices in the society, but also to make sure that the younger people who are on the streets also have a chance to express their views and to have those perspectives heard.

I think the nature of democratic process is not to try to preselect the leaders, but to establish some institutions and processes that then will allow for good, free and fair competition elections where

individuals will stand for election, and the Egyptian people will pick. And I think we have a real belief that that process can take place. And that what needs to happen now is to take the institutional decisions to repeal the emergency law, to take the steps to allow for parties to register, for there to be a full debate, and to have an election, and to have those very important voices that are being heard throughout Egyptian society now, have a chance to put their views forward in their candidacy.

On Tunisia, I would just say that we do think accountability is very important. Different societies have different ways of doing it, and different conflict situations, that has been done. But I think it is something that the interim government is focusing on is to establish an approach to accountability and understanding both of what happened during the past regime and during the transition, and we would certainly support that.

Mr. MEEKS. Are we dealing with, Tunisia again, is the administration reviewing Tunisia's aid package which is currently focused on military assistance. And is it more assistance needed by Tunisia for democratic institutional building as Tunisia's new government requested technical assistance from the United States for the purpose of supporting the reform agenda? And will the continuation of military assistance programs be contingent upon human rights benchmarks or other benchmarks?

Mr. STEINBERG. Well, clearly on the last, we are under a mandate from you to make sure that it does. And so that would be an important part of what we do. More broadly, we have been engaged in conversations with the interim government in terms of how we can support and help that transition. And I think that is, as I say, part of the flexibility and adaptability that we are trying to show now is to look for opportunities to support that process going forward.

Mr. MEEKS. And finally, let me just ask, what level of electoral success would you anticipate from the Tunisian Islamic groups, if they are allowed to compete in the national elections that they had promised within the next 6 months?

Mr. STEINBERG. Again, Congressman, we have basic a principle that guides us, which is that we will support and encourage governments that meet the basic tests of tolerance, inclusiveness and openness. And rather than trying to prejudge what these groups will do, we will judge them by their deeds.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. And before yielding 5 minutes to my Florida colleague, Mr. Rivera, I would like, without objection, the ranking member to be recognized for an announcement.

Mr. BERMAN. We have just learned that, and I think on behalf of the chair and the entire committee wants to extend our condolences and the condolences of the entire committee to the loved ones and friends of Khairy Ramadan Aly. This is a fellow who was a U.S. Embassy Cairo staff employee for 18 years. He went missing from his home on January 28th and just today has been confirmed as dead. And so on behalf of all of us——

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Mr. Berman. It is obviously a tribute to the dedicated, locally employed staff and the risks that they

take, and I appreciate that. And on behalf of all of us, we appreciate that.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Steinberg. Mr. Rivera.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you, Madam Chair. Mr. Secretary, thank you so much for being here. I am heartened by your testimony regarding the impact of the crisis in Egypt, vis-à-vis Israel. I am glad you agree that irrespective of whatever emerges out of the uncertain circumstances in Egypt that U.S. interests remain constant. And specifically that Egypt continue to honor its commitment to peace with Israel.

So I am wondering if you can elaborate, and please be as specific as possible, as to what exact message the United States is delivering, has been delivering, will be delivering to all the parties regarding Egypt's commitment to peace with Israel?

Mr. STEINBERG. I thank you, Congressman. The message has been very clear, which is the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt is not just in the interest of Israel, it is in the interest of Egypt and the region as a whole. And therefore, we would expect any government to honor its international commitments, and to honor a treaty that was signed by that government, and to remain committed to it not just in letter but in spirit.

This is a foundation for Egypt's future success. The prospect of the conflict with Israel would serve no interest of Egypt's, and it would certainly not be consistent with our interests. So I think we are very unequivocal about both our own position but also making fair that this is not a favor to anybody else. That if Egypt should continue it and the reason we would expect Egypt to continue it is because it is in Egypt's interest.

Mr. RIVERA. Over the years, Mr. Secretary, the United States has sold a great deal of military equipment to Egypt, and at the same time, we have been deeply committed to Israel's qualitative military edge, and essentially, Israel's ability to defend it. And part of that calculus in providing weapons to Egypt was that it was committed to peace with Israel. If Egypt's commitment toward peace with Israel changes, how will that effect future decisions about the sale and maintenance of weapon systems to the Egyptians?

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, any time there would be a dramatic change in circumstances, we would have to take that into account in making our decisions, but I think our focus now on the positive message, which is the benefits of engagement that we have had with Egypt and the Egyptian military, and therefore would expect them to see the benefits of continuing this and continuing that basic process, which has led to this long period of peace between Israel and Egypt.

Mr. RIVERA. Based on your experience and developments that you are seeing occurring right now, do you see Egypt continuing to play a positive role on issues in general regional stability, for example, opposition to Iran's nuclear program, standing up to Islamic radicalism, et cetera?

Mr. STEINBERG. I would have every reason to expect that a more democratic Egypt would be at least as much committed to those principles, because in a democratic society, all the things that you have talked about are inimical to a democratic society. And some of the kind of intolerance, the support for terrorism and the things

that we would be concerned about are something that a strong and vibrant democratic government in Egypt would also share. I think that has been our experience.

If you look around the world, who are our strong partners on all of these global challenges? Not just the shared values, but the shared interest. When we are dealing with Iran, who are our strong partners? Our strong partners in Europe, the democratic societies there. We are working with Japan, we are working with Korea. So I think we believe very strongly that in terms of the interests, whether it is sustaining peace in the Middle East, dealing with terrorism, dealing with Iran's nuclear program. That an open vibrant Egyptian Government would be very much in sync with those views and those perspectives.

Mr. RIVERA. And up to this moment here today, you see no indications whether that be from any elements of Egyptian society, the military or otherwise, civil society, other elements of the government that any of these prospects could change in the negative fashion?

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, we have to be vigilant. Obviously, we have seen events sometimes not fully predictable. But I think what we need to do is encourage and support those forces to reduce the chances of those things happening. And our whole strategy is to try to do that by engaging in supporting this process to reduce the risks that these dangers which you rightfully identify, and which we do have to be alert to, don't emerge.

Mr. RIVERA. Thank you, Madam Chair. And I yield back the remainder of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. And now I would like to yield to another Florida colleague, Congressman Deutch for 5 minutes of questioning.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to pick up where my colleague from Florida left off and broaden from there. Starting with the issue of aid, not just to Egypt but aid to Israel as well. It gives us a good jumping off point for a broader debate that is taking place right now on Capitol Hill, and that has to do with foreign aid more generally.

There are proposals that have been floating around that have suggested that State Department and foreign aid requests should be lumped in with non security spending and as such, should be subject to cuts, reductions anywhere between 10 and 30 percent. Given the State Department's role in Pakistan, and in Afghanistan, and in the war on terror, given the national security concerns that we have, and further, given the role that foreign aid plays not just in the Middle East, not just in helping Israel to ensure that Israel has a qualitative military edge, but in the role that foreign aid plays in global health and maternal care, children's health, the role that foreign aid plays fighting global hunger. The role of foreign aid in fighting narcotraffickers in Latin America and in continuing President Bush's signature achievement in combating AIDS in Africa.

Reconstruction, counterterrorism. And finally, given some of the suggestions that have been made on the Hill to eliminate foreign aid altogether, and suggestions from some outside, some prominent outside groups that all foreign aid should be on the table, is it ap-

propriate, do you believe, Mr. Secretary, for us to look to what is 1 percent or less of the Federal budget in finding ways to balance the budget by eliminating foreign assistance altogether? And wouldn't the elimination of foreign aid put our Nation at greater risk?

Mr. STEINBERG. Well, thank you, Congressman. As you can well imagine the Secretary and all of us feel very strongly, and the President that this is a critical part of assuring our national interest. Our ability to engage in the world, to support democratic institutions, to build economic opportunity, to deal with the problems of health and hunger are all critical questions we asked earlier about how the world looks at America. This is part of the positive engagement of American that allows us to build friends and to have support on our interests and they touch our national interests ourselves. If we don't deal with the problem of global public health, those things could come home to us.

It is having a strong, balanced strategy of smart power of engagement in the world, that has a strong defense, but also supports development and diplomacy that allows the United States to pursue its interests over the long term, and to have the kind of partners that we need to move forward.

We have had important successes in Iraq, we need to sustain that. It would be a tragedy right now with all that has been achieved and the sacrifice that has taken place not to be able to continue the progress they are creating, a good example of a democratic tolerant society in Iraq, which is a very powerful signal throughout this region, including to Egypt, to continue to make sure that the extremists don't come back in Afghanistan.

We know what had happened before and we have a critical issue that, again, echoes so much of what you all have been discussing this morning about how do we assure that extremism doesn't come back? It is by supporting tolerant, more open political societies and good governance and the rule of law. These are the things we do with our assistance programs, with our engagement with civil society. They are critically important to our national interests and this is, as we think about our long-term future and the role of the United States in the world, this is an absolutely indispensable part.

And so, we do hope that as we understand the fiscal challenges, but this is a very small part of the budget, but it is a critically important one for fundamental national security interests of United States.

Mr. DEUTCH. And just again, Mr. Secretary, am I correct that the foreign assistance budget is about 1 percent of the overall budget?

Mr. STEINBERG. That is about right.

Mr. DEUTCH. And if you could speak to what a cut of 10 to 30 percent across the board might mean? How would that impact American foreign policy?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think it would affect us across the board. It would mean that we would not be able to sustain our engagement on the civilian side in Iraq because it's so important that we make sure that this transition moves forward, that the reconciliation that is taking place through these two elections continues.

It would affect our ability to support civil society and democracy. It would affect our ability to deal with the problems of hunger and

creating sustainable agriculture. It would affect our ability to deal with the problem of global public health. It would affect our ability to support the kind of work that we need to do around the world to build strong institutions.

And we are, right now, having good opportunities where we are engaged. But the opportunities are even greater if we see and smartly apply those resources.

We have an obligation to you to make sure that they are well-targeted, that they are well-conceived, and that they are well-managed. But in return, we think we deliver a benefit, and I think no one more articulate than Secretary Gates has made clear about how important that is to our national security.

Mr. DEUTCH. And finally, Mr. Secretary, to those who suggest that we ought to eliminate foreign aid all together, I suggest to them that they would be putting our Nation at risk. Would you agree with that?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think, as I say, it is a critical part of our smart power engagement of the world. The three legs of that stool that all the present survivors recognized are critical to our national security. And over our history, we go back to the Marshall Plan and so many other examples of how we sustained our long-term influence and protected our interest by the wise use of our resources in this area.

Our military cannot protect our national interest alone. We have seen that in Iraq, and we see it in Afghanistan. It has to be a balanced effort. And our contribution, the part that goes to the State Department and assistance is very small compared to Defense. But has a huge multiplier effect, it has a huge positive impact on the well-being of the American people.

Also on the economic side it helps open up economic opportunities. It creates opportunities for American jobs and American exports. That is what our diplomats do every day, advocating for American interests, opening markets and the like. So there are many ways in which U.S. interests are being protected by this rather modest investment.

Mr. DEUTCH. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. And I yield back, Madam Chair.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much, Mr. Deutch.

Mr. Rohrabacher, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Now following up on my last colleague's line of questioning, putting America in jeopardy, let me just note putting us at a risk at a much greater level than what we are talking about is $1.5 trillion worth of deficit spending a year that we have to borrow from China. And we cannot maintain that. And if we continue to do that, our economy will collapse under a burden of debt that we have never experienced before.

So this is not, Oh boy, we would love to do this, we would love to do that. No, there are certain things that we are going have to come to grips with and be serious about. And I will tell you, borrowing more money from China in order to give it to other people in different countries is not something that I consider to be a positive option. It is crazy, it is insane.

We have been providing aid to Egypt over all of these years. And now we have people who seem to be high and mighty about how bad Mr. Mubarak is, but have supported this aid program to Egypt all of these years.

It seems to me that American foreign policy is not based on principle, as you have suggested today, it should be or has been, but instead it is based on juggling. What can we do for the moment not to create a crisis, rather than have a long-term principled policy and a policy aimed not at what we can do for the world but what is best for the people of the United States of America? And let me get to——

Mr. ACKERMAN. Would the gentleman yield?

Mr. ROHRABACHER. No, I won't. I have got a line of questioning I would like to ask. I have got a very fine diplomat. Let me just note, we have so much juggling going on, that we can't have someone like yourself answer a straight question about the nature of Sharia law. Now, if we can't do that, how do we expect to have the American people and the people of the world understand where we draw the line?

Yeah. We can have people jump up and applaud that Mr. Mubarak is gone, yeah. But what is going to happen 2 years down the road when we have an administration in Egypt that puts women in jail, much less permitting them to participate in the system, if they try to go on the street without wearing a veil? Is that what we are going to end up with Mubarak gone? We are trying not to end up with that.

Let me just note that I have been dismayed that for all of these years, we have taken an administration in Egypt, which is less than democratic, less than honest, we have known that, but we have treated them well, and then as soon as—but they have been basically a pro-stability and a pro-Western government. And as soon as they are vulnerable, we turn on them with a vengeance, as compared to an anti democratic regime in Iran when there are demonstrators in the streets against them, we have sort of a muffled response. Well, we can't really go in and side with the demonstrators against this anti-American Mullah regime dictatorship in Iran.

We can't do that because that would be just too intrusive. But in Egypt where you have a friendly regime—as I say, we don't just toss Mubarak, a guy who has tried to be a force for stability, we don't just toss him under the boss, we toss him to the wolves, and then we are surprised when the wolves end up eating our lunch.

Let's get to some basics here. The administration Mubarak—President Mubarak offered to say that he would not be a candidate, and his son would not be a candidate and he would oversee a basically a caretaker regime until the September elections were held, and the people of Egypt were permitted to make their decision as to what direction their country should go. What was wrong with that?

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, let me just briefly comment on your first point first, and then I'll——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Sure.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. You have 30 seconds.

Mr. STEINBERG. I understand.

Mr. ROHRABACHER. Pardon me.

Mr. STEINBERG. But having had it raised, I think our position on Sharia law is very clear. And it was illustrated very dramatically in the case of a proposal for the institution of Sharia law in Afghanistan, which would have deprived women of their rights and which would have been unacceptable to the United States. And we made clear to President Karzai in the Afghan Parliament that that was unacceptable to us.

So I don't think there was any lack of clarity or lack of understanding on our part about where the red lines are and our principals are. So I understand your question, but I want to make clear from our perspective that we do understand that point. And we do understand——

Mr. ROHRABACHER. It did seem that you were dodging the question earlier.

Mr. STEINBERG. I apologize if I appeared to be dodging, but I hope——

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. That was a good exchange. Thank you for those excellent questions.

Mr. Keating is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KEATING. Thank you, Madam Chair, and thank you for being here, Secretary Steinberg. During the Iranian protest 2 years ago, Americans saw how the Iranian people used the social media, it is no longer in dispute, the effect of the Internet on the Egyptian uprising. And they use Twitter, Facebook, texting, YouTube, to gain a following in the country. And exacting admiration in much of the world process.

However, many American people were shocked to know years ago that the Iranians were using the social media, you know, to monitor protests and to down opposition leaders and even worse, we discovered that companies, as was mentioned by Congressman Smith, with the presence in the United States were helping the Iranian regime exploit technology and turn innovation into violence.

So when the Egyptian Government commenced its cyber crackdown, frankly no one was surprised. I don't think they followed that. But it seems that American company is involved in this instance as well. A company in California sold the Egyptian state-run Internet provider the technology to monitor the Internet, allowing the Egyptian Government to crack down in dissent. And I also understand that the Pakistani Government, a telecom company and the Saudi Government's telecom company have this technology. It is no secret, I think, to anyone, that neither has a glowing record on human rights.

I would like to know what the Department is doing to work with American companies that are selling their technology and these products around the world to ensure that these products are not an obstacle to human rights at best or a tool of violence at worst. When we sell weapons to other countries, we require an end-use monitoring agreement. Do you think that such an agreement to make sure that U.S. technology is not abused is in order at all? Is that being considered, thank you.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, as I mentioned to Congressman Smith, I am not familiar with the specific case, but we will get

back to you on that. I think, more generally, one of the things that we have tried to do as we work with civil society is both to promote openness and to support their access to alternative media when it has been deprived. But frankly, also, to help them understand the dangers and the risk to them too. And I think it is two sides to the coin, and that we have to be alert to the dangers that will be used by people for the wrong reasons.

So part of our educational effort in our work with them is to help groups in civil society protect themselves and to take measures to be sensitive to these things.

In terms of the specific technologies, again, without knowing the specifics, it is hard to make a general observation, but I think it is something we should take under advisement.

Mr. KEATING. I would ask if there is any discussion along those lines, I would like to know myself, and I am sure that many members of the committee would like to know that because, indeed, people are losing their lives based on this technology. And it is not a stretch to say it is being used as a weapons by some of these other countries, and as such, should be treated that way in end-use monitoring agreements so it would be curious to know anything on that. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, do get back to us on that.

Mr. KEATING. I yield the rest of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Without objection, I would just like to yield myself 30 seconds of time to welcome back and congratulate and say thank you to a member of our Foreign Affairs family, a member of our majority staff, Matt Zweig, who has just returned from a year of military service in Kandahar, Afghanistan. So thank you, Matt. Good to have you back.

And with that, I would like to yield 5 minutes of questioning to our subcommittee chairman on Europe and Eurasia, Mr. Burton.

Mr. BURTON. I thank the gentlelady for yielding, and I appreciate you being here, Mr. Steinberg. My big concern is the United States first, and our very close ally, Israel in the Middle East, and toward that end, it appears to me there is still a great deal of uncertainty right now. We are getting all kinds of reports on what is going on and nobody knows for sure what is happening. But we do know there has been upheaval, not only in Egypt, but in other countries over there. And we get about 30 percent of our energy from that part of the world.

And although the decision on exploring for energy here in the United States will not rest with the State Department, the State Department does have a role to play in deciding where our national security interests lie.

And right now if we have problems over there in the Suez Canal, and Egypt is the Suez Canal, or if things get bad over in the Persian Gulf states, or if, and we see some people concerned about things in Iraq. If things go awry in Iraq because of Iran, we can see our supply of energy diminished dramatically. And I think the State Department's obligation is that they need to start expressing that to the administration. The administration has—and we get about 30 percent of our energy from the Persian Gulf region. We get about 20 percent from Venezuela who is in league with Tehran right now.

So there is half of our energy. And we can't get permits to drill in the Gulf now. We can't drill off the Continental Shelf, we can drill in the ANWR. We can't drill for natural gas. We had T. Boone Pickens here the last couple of days talking about that.

And we have the ability to be energy independent within a decade. There is no question about it. We have more energy in this country collectively, including gas and oil, coal shale that can be converted into oil, that any place in the world, there is no question about it. But we are not moving in that direction, so we are still dependent on the Middle East and they have a life and death grip on us if everything goes awry.

And so I would like for you to answer the question, why is it there is not more attention being paid by this administration and the State Department to the security of this Nation, both economically and militarily, because we are not moving toward energy independence? Not only that, but if you talk to the average person who is paying $3.50 a gallon for gasoline knowing it is going to go to $5 or $6 if things get out of control in a little bit, they are saying, you know, if we have that ability, why don't we do something about it?

So where is the State Department on this issue? And why isn't the State Department and Secretary Clinton talking to the President about the long-term issue of what happens if things go in the wrong direction in that part of the world?

And make no mistake about it, if you look at history and there is a book from 1776 to now, which I hope you read and the people at the State Department, you will see upheaval in that part of the world is a constant, and our security depends on it. So while we are concerned about that area and democracy and everything else, why in the world isn't State and administration talking about moving toward energy independence.

Mr. STEINBERG. Mr. Chairman, it is a complex issue for the whole administration.

Mr. BURTON. It is not that complex.

Mr. STEINBERG. In terms of the other parts of the administration that are engaged. And I am not the spokesman from that respect, but I can talk about some other things.

Mr. BURTON. Before you go to other things. What I would really like for you to do is go back to the State Department and tell them to talk to the administration about our national security. We are supposed to work with other nations in the world, to bring about stability and we use foreign policy and foreign aid to do all that. But the number 1 responsibility of government, according to the Constitution of the United States, is to protect this country, economically and, militarily. And we are risking that right now, all you have to do is look at what is going on not only in Egypt, but in other countries in the Middle East.

Mr. STEINBERG. I think if you look at our energy strategy, one, the President has indicated the importance of developing domestic sources. Two, we have talked about, in addition to oil and gas, there are other energy sources like the efforts we are doing to revive nuclear energy. We also are working to diversify so that we are not dependent on these dangerous areas. For example, a new agreement that we are negotiating with Mexico to have access to

activities on the boundary in the Gulf. I was just in Africa and looking at opportunities to have access with Ghana, a democracy in Africa which has——

Mr. BURTON. I am talking about energy we have here in the United States.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Steinberg. Your time has run out. Mr. Burton, I think you have made your point clear and we would appreciate it if you would get back to Mr. Burton about energy independence and the administration's plan.

Mr. STEINBERG. Certainly.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Mr. Cicilline of Rhode Island is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I too want to welcome our guest and thank you for being here. And thank you Mr. Secretary for being here. The first question I have is a follow up on Mr. Berman's question, is it the administration's position that with respect to the constitutional provision in the Egyptian Constitution with respect to religious parties that it is possible to repeal that provision, but have a sufficiently—a government which is sufficiently tolerant to satisfy you or satisfy the Department that it will protect the interest of the Egyptian people and our international interests, or is it the administration's position that that prohibition ought to remain as part of the Egyptian Constitution? It sounded as if you weren't committed or the administration was not committed—at least to advocating for the preservation of that.

Mr. STEINBERG. I think we are committed to advocating for the principle. I think it would be a bit perilous for us to try to write the Constitution in the context they are doing it. There may be other formulations that are consistent with that principle, but I don't want to have any ambiguity about the importance of the principle.

Again, that is why, in our conversation earlier, I mentioned some cases where we have advocated very vigorously where that principle was inconsistent with basic values. And so that is what we will focus on going forward, is it consistent, that would be a way we would judge.

Mr. CICILLINE. Also, would you tell me, it seems as if there is tremendous concern from everyone that has spoken really to us about the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in a future Egyptian Government. And I am just wondering what your impression is with respect to the likelihood of that happening. Interestingly, of course, when President Mubarak met, he had met first with them really in response to the protest which suggested to those of us from the outside that they may have a more significant role in a future government in Egypt than we might have first thought. So what do you think is a likely role they would play? And then second, do we have strategies or an approach which would help to ensure that funding doesn't go from the Muslim Brotherhood to Hamas moving forward?

Mr. STEINBERG. Well, we are very focused and we are very vigilant because of the risk that this process become hijacked by extremists, by individualist groups that don't reflect or respect the very principles that we think people are demonstrating for. And we are obviously going to have to judge that by what emerges. There

are an infinite number of possibilities that might come forward. But what we have to be clear on is that we expect the next Egyptian Government to have and advance the values of openness, tolerance, allowing people to pursue an open life with their human rights respected, with diversity respected, particularly on issues like religious freedom, on women's rights, on a right to have freedom of expression, of the press, of assembly. And we will apply those criteria with a real recognition from the history that we have seen in this region of the dangers that a process which might begin with good impulse might not end up that way.

So I think our challenge right now is rather than trying to say specifically now what will happen if it goes wrong, is to focus on what we can do to help it go right, and to support that process, and to be prepared to deal with it, and be clear that there would be consequences if the outcome is one that is not consistent with our values and our interest.

But right now, I think what it is critical is for us to talk about what we are for. And I think by articulating those principles and by identifying what we expect and what we believe is in the interest of the Egyptian people and what we think they are out there on the streets for. I think that creates a positive engagement for us, not one of—again being vigilant, but not based on the fear of the worst, but also an opportunity to achieve this good result.

Again, we must remain vigilant and have seen this go awry. And we will be prepared to both make clear what we are going to do and to deal with those circumstances.

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you. And I wanted to say finally, thank you for your very articulate testimony with respect to our responsibility to really approach our foreign policy in a very balanced way. It is clear to me that it is in the national security interest of our country to make the kind of investments that we are making around the world, both to avoid greater costs for our failure to become fully engaged. But also to retain our moral authority so that we can do the work on behalf of the American people, both in supporting our economy and supporting our security.

And so I think this question about foreign aid is an important one, but it is not simply done to help other nations, but it is really done principally to help the United States maintain its position internationally and to protect our economy and to protect our national security and I thank you particularly for those comments as well. I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much. And now we would like to hear from Chairman Ed Royce, the chair of the Foreign Affairs' Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade.

Mr. ROYCE. Mr. Steinberg, I met with a group of seven Egyptians from Cairo and Alexandria who had recently came to the United States, many of them young professionals, and I asked them to give me their opinions on what needs to be done. I would like to share with you sort of their list from the front lines.

The first observation they made is they shared with me that we need strict implementation of international human rights laws in this country and that there should be some discussion of this in the

United States. A guarantee of basic freedoms by holding accountable those who violate international human rights laws.

The second thing they see missing from the discussion is an end to all discriminatory acts that are based on ethnicity and sex and religion throughout all sectors of society. And most important, some kind of discipline for those who violate that prohibition.

They asked for eradication of all ideologies in the education system because those installed discrimination and hatred among students starting at the preschool level and all the way up to the university level. This is partly because they say the Muslim Brotherhood has gotten control in the educational system and it is using it for that purpose.

The fourth thing, these are the young students that were in the streets—they want awareness of the imminent danger of radical religious groups in Egypt, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which, to some extent, they say is funded by Iran. And one of the things they report is there is walking around money, and food, that has been provided by the Iranians, and it is annoying to those that are leading the charge to have on the streets a foreign influence, and they would like that known.

They say that this group has already infiltrated the backbone of some Egyptian society. They also ask for a reformation to the judicial system, a reformation to a system which currently supports a corrupt regime and does not provide justice to the citizens through the implementation of the laws.

They say bribery and corruption are the norm within most of the judicial branch and report—the young professionals told me they pay as much as 25 bribes in order get a little business going or in order to be professionals. We heard it from Hernando de Soto's report, right? The Finance Minister or former Finance Minister, I think it was of Egypt, supported Hernando's work. Hernando does his study, shows how you can unleash all of this potential growth in Egypt because you only know who owns 10 percent of the property. Nobody can start a business without doing payoffs.

So he lays out the reforms and the first thing the government does is sack their Minister who supported these reforms. That shows us how much has to be done here. So I would just add to your talking points when you talk about this, a government that respects its people, that is what we want from Egypt. A government that respects its people and isn't corrupt; let's add that to our talking points about what we want done. I just wanted your opinion about what the students and the young professionals had told me.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, I think that is an enormously constructive agenda. I think it is an important one that should be a shared agenda of all of us. I think the issues that you have raised are issues that should be of concern and that are important to the long-term success of Egypt. So if we haven't been clear enough that that is what we hope to see, we will do a better job. But it is one of the things. Especially, I want to agree especially with you on the point of rule of law and corruption, which is a big concern and it is really critical to the future. So thank you for those suggestions.

Mr. ROYCE. Well, there is one other point that they wanted to make. They said there are a lot of good voices such as the Council

of the Wise, which was formed after January 25th revolution, as well as many other voices in Egyptian society that are well-known, that are admired by the people and are not part of the Muslim Brotherhood. And every one of them was absolutely in terror of what might happen if we end up negotiating and help putting the Muslim Brotherhood in positions of responsibility because, as they shared with me, that is an organization that only exists to take power, put in place an Islamic society and then carry out of the rest of the agenda, which, as one of them told me, the next thing you know we will be at war with Israel if they get control of the government. If you talk to young people in the Muslim Brotherhood, that is where they are driving the cadres on the street, that is the ideology.

So can you keep them out of the equation? I know we discussed this earlier, but can you do something to help those voices in Egypt that are so frightened of that consequence?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think that should be our objective and that is what we are trying to do.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you.

Mr. STEINBERG. As I said, we have a program to address this and we can and will do more.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. ROYCE. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. My colleague from New York. It is good to see you, Elliot, recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you, Madam Chair, and I want to first of all welcome the Secretary. I was here for his remarks and I have known him for many years and we are lucky to have him. He does a great job. Thank you for the job you are doing.

As you know, for the past 4 years, I chaired the Western Hemisphere Subcommittee on this committee, and now I am the ranking member. And one of the things that has been irking me, and I am sure irking you and a lot of us, is that a lot of the South American governments are recognizing Palestine. And why it especially irks me is that the Palestinians are refusing to sit down with the Israelis and negotiate without all these ridiculous preconditions which actually shouldn't be preconditions at all. That is what you negotiate about.

And I look at it, it is rewarding the Palestinians for their intransigence. And I think that is the wrong thing to do, because rather than tell them they should go to the negotiating table, it sort of rewards them for not going to the negotiating table. Now we have this resolution before the Security Council which condemns Israel for the settlements, and makes it seem that the settlements are the reason why there is no peace, which I think is a bunch of nonsense. I think that if the Palestinians would negotiate with the Israelis that the settlement issue, along with other issues would be taken care of.

I would hope that if that happens, the administration would strongly and forcefully veto such a resolution as we have in the past. And I believe that the administration so far has not yet unequivocally indicated that it would do so. So I would like to ask you

is that a fact, and if it is, I would strongly urge the administration to veto this resolution of the Security Council if it comes up.

Mr. STEINBERG. I thank you, Congressman Engel. First just, if I comment on your first point about your recognitions we have made very clear to a lot of countries, including in the region that you talked about that you have had and continue to have responsibility for that we think this is counterproductive. I am disappointed frankly that we haven't had more success, but it has been in our engagement at the highest levels with each those governments. I, myself, have had several of those conversations. And so our position is well-known on that.

With respect to the Security Council, we have made very clear we do not think the Security Council is the right place to engage on these issues. I have had some success, at least for the moment, in not having that arise there. We will continue to employ the tools that we have to make sure that that continues to not happen. And we made clear both to the Palestinians and our key partners that there are other venues to discuss these issues, but the most important one of which is the one that you identified, which is the only way that this is going to be resolved is through engagement between the two parties, and that is our clear consistent position.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you. Yesterday I asked the two questions to our panelists and I want to ask you the same two questions and so what your answer is vis-à-vis what they said to me. And I know some of this has been discussed in the past hour or so. But what are the differences you see between 1979 Iran revolution and 2011 Egypt? What are some of the differences that make us hopeful that perhaps the results that we saw in Iran wouldn't happen in Egypt?

And then, I know that another question I asked yesterday which I understand Mr. Ackerman touched upon is what do we do if Lebanon rejects the special tribunal? Mikati—the answer from the panelists yesterday from that question of mine is that Mikati should be shunned. He should not be invited to the United States, he should be told that this is unacceptable, and we should shun him.

As you know, I wrote the Syria Accountability Act, passed in 2004, and with our now chairman, she and I were on a crusade for many years to do this. And now Syria is still doing the same kind of nasty things it has always been doing in the region. We now have an ambassador there, but I don't see any positive things from their side. I would like to you comment on those three things if you could.

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you. Both obviously complicated questions, especially the first. I got my start in government working on the Iranian hostage crisis in 1979. And so I reflected a lot on that. I would simply say, first no two circumstances are identical. But also our engagement in Iran prior to the revolution was very different. The revolution of Iran was much more associated with our engagement with the prior regime.

Here I think we are seen as a positive force on the Egyptian side, so I think we can have a positive influence and I would be happy to go into more detail with you in less than 5 seconds.

With respect to Lebanon, let me just say that we believe the continuation of the tribunal is essential, we made clear to Mikati in

direct conversations that we had through the Embassy that that is our expectation. Again, I don't want to assume the worst now and say the precise consequences of it not going forward. But we have made clear that is what our expectation is, it is the international obligation of any government in Lebanon to meet those obligations. And we have made clear to Mr. Mikati that we expect him to do so as well.

Mr. ENGEL. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Engel.

I am pleased to recognize Mr. Manzullo, the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific, for 5 minutes.

Mr. MANZULLO. Thank you, Madam Chair. In the summer of 2009, many of us in this country were very dismayed over the fact that when the demonstrations broke out in Iran in the streets on day 1, our President said nothing. On day 2, our President said nothing. Finally, on day 3 he said something to the effect that we need a continued dialogue with the clerics. That was extraordinarily disappointing.

When the people started marching in Egypt, it didn't take the President that long to undermine President Mubarak and say he has got to go. I would like to know what the basis of the President's decision making was. At that time, you were Deputy Secretary of State and doing nothing in Iran 1½ years ago. Why didn't he do something?

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, I obviously have a different view on what took place both in terms of the statements that we made in support of the people in the streets in Iran, and the support that we have continued to give for that, as well as our continued focus on the problem of the depravation of human rights in Iran.

Mr. MANZULLO. No, I am talking about the response, not the focus. Don't tell me that the people in the streets were supported by the U.S. Government because they were not.

Mr. STEINBERG. We made clear our strong support for them, but at the same time——

Mr. MANZULLO. But you didn't, that is not correct. They were not supported.

Mr. STEINBERG. I think we gave the support that the President articulated and the Secretary articulated about our strong commitment to their rights to peacefully demonstrate and to assemble, the need for the government there to engage with them.

Mr. MANZULLO. Nothing on the order that was given to the people in Egypt specifically saying that Mubarak has got to go.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, I also do not—on that side, we have not used that expression.

Mr. MANZULLO. Wait a second, wait a second. You are telling me that President Obama has not said in one way or the other that Mubarak must go? Is that what you are telling this committee?

Mr. STEINBERG. What the President has said and what the Secretary has said is that change has to come, that a transition has to come.

Mr. MANZULLO. Can you give me a yes or no answer to my question?

Mr. STEINBERG. We have not used the expression that you identified, sir.

Mr. MANZULLO. So you said events must go into action and——

Mr. STEINBERG. Correct.

Mr. MANZULLO. Everybody in the world understands that President Obama's position is to push Mubarak out of office. And I am just really astonished that you think that that is an amazing statement. So, why didn't we do anything more in Iran?

Mr. STEINBERG. Again, I think our position has been clearly to support of the rights of the people to demonstrate. We have made clear that we thought that the election was not conducted fairly, openly, that we spoke out against the oppression, we spoke out against the violence.

Mr. MANZULLO. It was clearly not enough. I mean, I don't think anybody in this country was interested in Iran turning around, was satisfied with the statement of the President of the United States. So, what are you going to do now in light of the President's involvement in Egypt? What happens if demonstrations break out in Tehran? What are you going to do now?

Mr. STEINBERG. We will do as we have done. We have said about demonstrations whether they are in Syria or in Iran.

Mr. MANZULLO. You see, that is the problem, the answer that you gave, that you are giving, I know it is well-intended and it is obviously factual, but it is weak. And it is the message of weakness that gets sent abroad as to what the United States is doing. President Obama and the Secretary of State have been very clear about what is going on in Egypt, granted the demonstrations there have lasted longer than in Tehran. And either they said directly or inferentially that Mubarak has to leave. And apparently that is going on right now. But it was so weak in Iran. Don't you think that the President's statements go a lot toward formulating public policy when people take to the streets such as they did in Tehran?

Mr. STEINBERG. Again, I think the President spoke clearly to this. But I also think there are other things that we did, and partially using tools that you give us, we have identified members of the Iranian Government who are human rights abusers and imposed sanctions on them. We have taken measures to work to appoint a special human rights rapporteur in Iran.

Mr. MANZULLO. Well, they put three hikers on trial for treason.

Mr. STEINBERG. As we have made very clear and worked very hard, including——

Mr. MANZULLO. Well, nothing is working, so are you going to change something in Iran?

Mr. STEINBERG. We have a very comprehensive strategy in Iran which not only deals with the human rights abuses there which are substantial, but also the Iranian nuclear program, which has led us with the leadership of the Congress working together with us to impose the most comprehensive sanctions on Iran that have ever been imposed. And have led us to help mobilize the international community. And I think the two have gone together because the fact of the democratic repression——

Mr. MANZULLO. Well, in my remaining time, I just want to let you know how disappointed we were with the President and the very weak response to the people demonstrating for democracy in the streets of Tehran back in the summer of 2009.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank, you Mr. Manzullo. And I very much agree with you. Mr. Murphy of Connecticut is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you very much, Madam Chair. And thank you, Mr. Steinberg, for sticking around with us. I know we are jumping all over the map a bit here, but I want to bring us back to one of the subjects at hand today. We are obviously continuing to monitor the events as they play out today in Egypt. But if what we believe is happening is happening today, as you hint at in your testimony, one of the stories of success will be the potentially very positive role that a secular, independent, well-respected military has played in this ongoing transitional process in Egypt.

And I mention that as a segue to talk about Lebanon. The LAF is at a very different point in its military developmental history. We still have members of the Armed Forces there communicating via cell phones with each other across the Nation. And I want to ask you about how the United States continues to play a constructive role in what is really the nascent developmental stages of the LAF, and how we make sure that our assistance to the Lebanese army continues in the tradition of achieving both our goals and the Lebanese military's goal going forward in that nation?

Mr. STEINBERG. Thank you, Congressman. I think you have identified obviously an enormously important issue because we have seen the possibility and the prospect of development of a professional LAF that is responsive to a constitutional democratic government as critical to the success of Lebanon and particularly to deal with the challenge of Hezbollah and armed groups in that society.

We want to see a professional civilianly controlled military that can exert control over the country on the behalf of a democratic government. And we have been encouraged by some of the progress that the LAF has made. So we would like to sustain with that, and yet we recognize the situation is fluid in Lebanon. And we are very vigilant to the possibility that a change in the political circumstances might undermine that objective.

So we focused on two things, which is one, a very vigorous commitment to end use monitoring to make sure that none of our assistance to the LAF falls into inappropriate hands other than the LAF itself. And the record is very strong on that in terms of the LAF's ability to monitor and implement that.

Also, as we see the political developments move forward, to make sure that the independence and the role of the LAF is not compromised and that any implication that that might have for our assistance.

We would hope that we would see a continuation of the strong support for the LAF. It is a critical component of the sovereignty and the integrity of the country as long as it is associated with a democratic transparent open, a government that is not the products of outside interference.

Mr. MURPHY. Can you talk a little bit more about benchmarks and milestones? How do we moving forward—I understand that our military aid there is obviously interdependent with the political developments in Lebanon. You talk a little bit about how we make sure that the military and the LAF are hitting benchmarks and milestones that assure that we are making a wise investment?

Mr. STEINBERG. Well, we have a very robust engagement with the leadership. I believe it was just 2 or 3 weeks ago that General Mattis of CENTCOM was out there meeting with the Lebanese leadership. And I think that is that engagement. The training that we do with them, the professional development that we do with them that allows us to watch their progress, to identify programs that continue to help develop their professionalization. And clearly, it is linked to the political developments because their ability to do this requires the strong support of the political institutions that allow them to not only develop their professional capabilities and to use this equipment but also to have the mandate to extend their authority throughout the country.

Mr. MURPHY. And just finally, to the Prime Minister designate, you talk about, in your testimony, making sure that he makes good on his pledge to build an inclusive government. How do we judge that inclusiveness? What do we look to as the keys to know whether we have an inclusive government that continues to be a recipient of U.S. economic and military aid?

Mr. STEINBERG. I think we look both to the representativeness of that government to make sure that no important constituency in the Lebanese society is cut out, particularly obviously a concern with the evolution that the Sunni population is appropriately represented. But also to make sure across the political spectrum, that we have an inclusive government that includes the March 14th coalition, and it includes the voices that have been the progressive voices in Lebanon, and which, I think, it will be something that we supported strongly. So we believe that those voices need to be included in any government going forward.

Mr. MURPHY. Thank you.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you very much.

So pleased to yield 5 minutes to the vice chair on the Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Mr. Pence of Indiana.

Mr. PENCE. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I want to thank you for calling this, what turns out to be extraordinarily timely hearing. I always want to make a point, I want to thank the Secretary for his service to the country, for his distinguished career, it is an honor to you have back before the committee.

For some reason, this feels a little bit like déjà vu all over again, I am sure it does to you, Mr. Secretary, with your long career in these matters. And frankly, with word of the potential eminent and historic change that could take place in Egypt before the turn of the clock today, on that part of the world, this conversation is extremely important.

I must say, as the ranking member knows, as we partnered together in the summer of 2009 to author a resolution that passed this Chamber nearly unanimously and passed the Senate unanimously, my first inclination is to stand with the people, to stand with those who are clamoring for basic human rights, for freedoms, for more access to the democratic process. And I carry that bias into this conversation.

I support those who continue to call for democratic reforms, I am grateful for the State Department and for the administration

broadly, expressions of support for an orderly transition and the recognition of universal human rights.

Let me, though, by way of raising an issue to you, let me, though, express a word of caution. One of the first things that I learned as a member of this committee traveling into that part of the world was the enormous importance of Egypt, and to the history of the region, not just at this time, but obviously through the millennium. The developments in Egypt are of enormous consequence to U.S. strategic interest, and I would say, most especially, to the interest of what I like to refer to fondly as our most cherished ally, Israel.

And so while I know the folks at the administration has largely been and your remarks have largely been on insuring an orderly transition, I am concerned about an orderly transition to what, or an orderly transition to whom? And specifically, I find my mind drifting back to history, and to lessons of history. Edmund Burke, famously a member of Parliament, one of the strongest supporters of the revolution that took place in the colonies, here in the United States, but also one of the harshest critics of what happened in France. Edmund Burke warned that different from the American Revolution, which was largely born on a reach for democracy and a foundation of respect for the rule of law, the French Revolution was something different. And he warned of nefarious factions which could have opportunity, his words now, "to become master of your assembly and the master of your whole republic."

And with the news the CIA Director, I am told just moments ago told a public meeting of the House Intelligence Committee that he expects President Hosni Mubarak to step down this evening.

I guess my question to you, Mr. Secretary, very sincerely is where is that leading us? Who is that leading us to? I know that the new Vice President has expressed and demonstrating a willingness to engage the Muslim Brotherhood in a dialogue, an organization that has largely outlawed in Egypt for decades. But I guess my first question is, do you expect President Mubarak to step down, does the State Department anticipate that?

And secondly, what is the effect of that? Where is that leading us? And thirdly, can you speak to are we sending a message sufficiently to this transition authority dominated as it is by the military in Egypt, that we expect not only an orderly transition, but we expect order at the end of it. We expect, if we are to continue that nearly a minimum of $1 billion a year in foreign aid that goes directly to Egypt, the military coordination support that we provide, that we expect a successor government to respect the treaties and the alliances and the allies and the interests of the United States if we are to continue to go forward with that foreign aid and with the nature of the alliance that we have had with Egypt.

So I would love your responses in whatever time the chairman will allow.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. 7 seconds. Plenty of time.

Mr. STEINBERG. "Yes" is probably a good answer. But to the last question, the answer is yes. We made clear what we do expect—and I think that is the way we tried to engage throughout this process is to set down a set of principles that we expect the process

to embody and the outcome to embody, and that that is what we will judge it by.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you, Mr. Pence.

Mr. Faleomavaega, our colleague from American Samoa.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Thank you, Madam Chair.

And, Mr. Secretary, I do personally want to welcome you before the committee. And I also want to express my deepest appreciation to the service that you have given to our country.

And I want to offer my personal welcome to one of our committee staffers who have just returned from his tour in the military. I wish I had the same reception when I came back from Vietnam, Madam Chair. That wasn't my experience, for those of us who had the unfortunate experience of having served in Vietnam.

Mr. Secretary, I have often heard people say how important the Golden Rule is; the Golden Rule, meaning that treat your fellow men as you would like to be treated. I have also heard another interpretation of the Golden Rule, and that is, he who has the gold makes the rule.

What I am getting at, Mr. Secretary, for some 30 years now—and it has been one way of keeping the peace especially and what took place historically between Israel and Egypt, and for the 30-year period we have given well over $65 billion in financial assistance to Egypt, and $36 billion of that went to Egypt's military defense system.

I am curious if—and I suspected from what my friend from Indiana has just given his concerns for which I share that same concern with Mr. Pence, but it seems that more and more that it is coming out in the current crisis in Egypt is that the military and the Muslim Brotherhood seem to be the two main factions that are going to have a lot of influence and impact on the future of where Egypt is going as far as its future is concerned.

Now, I have noticed that you have given in your statement that has been part of the administration's policy we want the people of Egypt to determine their own future. But would it be correct for me to say that in that mix, the military and the Muslim Brotherhood definitely are going to be very important factors in determining Egypt's future.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, I think what is important is that the military play the kind of role we expect the military to play in a democratic society, which is to support democratic governance and to respect the rights of the people. And I think we have been encouraged over the past several weeks that the military has played a constructive role. But it is not for the military to make the government, it is for the people to make the government, and that is what we would expect. And we would expect as we move forward with the democratic, inclusive government that the military would be in service of that.

We have obviously talked a lot today about the Muslim Brotherhood. I can only reiterate the critical view that we have, which is that we will look to what government is formed, and we will hold it to a set of principles, and we will expect the members of the government to uphold those principles, and we will expect that they are responsive to what we believe is the yearnings of the people on

the street. And that is the way we will judge our relationship going forward.

I don't think we want to be naive, but I think we are hopeful that what we have seen is a strong sense that there is elements of civil society of the people, the Council of Wise Men and others, the people that Congressman Royce talked about, that can form a strong, stable, democratic government there, and we need to do everything we can to support them.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. I know my time is running, but I just wanted to share another irksome situation as I want with my friend from New York. The fact that 350 million people in the Arab community's future rests on the fact that these two countries, Saudi Arabia and Egypt—that if these two countries falter, there is definitely going to be some very serious problems coming out of that.

I say irksome to the fact that one of the main issues that always seems to come into the equation when we talk about the Middle East is oil. My sense of irksome is the fact that we have spent almost $1 trillion in getting rid of Saddam Hussein, and expenditures of lives of our own soldiers, and the amount of energy and resources, and yet when it came time to divvy up the fortunes, some 30 major oil companies that conducted biddings of the contracting and the oil to be extracted from Iraq, to my surprise China was the winner of the bidding process.

Now, correct me if I am wrong on this, but the fact that it was our blood, our money, our resources, and supposedly having some sense of benefit as well for our country, but as it turned out, China was the beneficiary. Am I correct on this?

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, there are a number of American firms who are there. Exxon for sure, and Shell probably. We have worked with them to encourage them to participate. We have worked with the Iraqi Government to create the conditions that would make this attractive to American firms.

One of the problems, and it is an ongoing problem with the Iraqi Government, is that they haven't really opened this up to the kind of investment that we would like to see. It is a big priority of the engagement, and as the new government is formed there, we will continue to push this to make it because we think American firms have a lot to contribute to the economic and energy future of Iraq.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

I am pleased to yield to Mr. Duncan of South Carolina for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you, Madam Chairman. I hope that I have more than 30 seconds than you gave me the other day.

Thank you so much, Mr. Steinberg, for being here. A lot of great questions have been asked today, and you all have really delved into a lot of the subjects that are concerning for me. So I am just going to piggyback on Mr. Burton's comments earlier about energy independence.

Instability in the Middle East. When I was a young boy, I remember the gas shortages. I remember the crisis that we had in Iran. I remember countries around the world where you had revolutionary factions, and you had groups that weren't friendly to the United States step into the void. So it is very concerning to me and

the folks that I represent back in the State of South Carolina that we have stability in the Middle East.

We have a port in Charleston that receives shipments that come through the Suez and the Panama, so it is important that for trade and economic prosperity in this country that stability in the Suez region is maintained, stability in not only the North Africa and Middle East, but also East Africa. So there are a lot of different things that are concerning here.

So who steps into the void in this process is interesting. And you stated that the administration would adhere to consistent principles regardless of who was in power. And the question I have for you, and taken in the light of stability, and taken in the light of what our energy independence needs are—and let me just segue to that for just a second because you mentioned other sources of energy.

I think it is imperative that the United States and the administration's policies look at American emergency independence and use American resources that lessen our dependence on foreign sources, because we are seeing rising gas prices which affect input costs, which affect commodity prices. So it is a huge trickle-down effect.

So let me segue back into is the administration actively working to prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from being involved in this process of new governance in Egypt.

Mr. STEINBERG. Congressman, I would say that we are actively working to make sure that the government that emerges is an inclusive, tolerant, democratic one that respects the rights of women, minorities, religious minorities and the like. It is not focused on one particular group; it is on all groups. We want the principle of anybody participating in a future Egyptian Government to sustain those values. And anybody and any group that isn't consistent with that, we would not support their being a part of the government.

Mr. DUNCAN. So along those lines, what specific steps is the State Department or this administration taking along those lines?

Mr. STEINBERG. That is precisely why we have been so active in pushing the Egyptian Government to engage in a prompt, orderly transition, because we believe the best chance of getting that tolerant outcome that we want with the kinds of people that Congressman Royce talked about is to move forward with the process and to engage with those forces, because those are the forces that can come together and create both democracy and stability in Egypt.

Mr. DUNCAN. Has the administration, in your support for clear and consistent principles, stated to Egypt that you would not support the Muslim Brotherhood in any shape, form, or fashion?

Mr. STEINBERG. Again, Congressman, I don't think we single out any individual group. We say what we would support, and we would not support those who are not consistent with those principles.

Mr. DUNCAN. I would hope that the State Department policy would be to support factions that are friendly to the United States, friendly to the United States' economic interests, and friendly to the United States as far as national security interests.

Mr. STEINBERG. I think we feel comfortable, if you look at history, that democratic governments where people really have a

voice, and they get to choose, and they are not intimidated, and there is diversity are friendly to the United States. If you look at the democracies around the world, almost to a country those are our friends.

So I think that is why we are so committed to moving forward with this process, because we do think it achieves exactly what you have identified.

Mr. DUNCAN. Thank you.

I yield back.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much.

And to round out the question-and-answer period, I am so pleased to yield as our last interviewer Mr. Griffin for the Subcommittee on Europe and Eurasia, the vice chair of that subcommittee.

Thank you, Mr. Griffin.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you, Madam Chair.

We had some testimony yesterday regarding the potential for al-Qaeda to exploit some of the instability in northern Africa, particularly in Egypt, and I just wanted to get your comments on that. There was a Wall Street Journal op-ed by Kenneth Pollack on this yesterday, and understanding that this may be down the road a bit, sort of intermediate term and not immediate, and also understanding that Egypt has a history of doing a pretty good job of keeping some of the more extreme elements under control, could you comment on whether al-Qaeda is looking to recruit or take advantage of the power vacuum in the region?

Mr. STEINBERG. Without making a specific reference to that, because I don't know specifically that they are, but I would have to—I think we have to be alert to the possibility that they would. I think that we know that they are looking for any opportunities to advance their agenda in any place that they can find it. And certainly places where there are real vacuums, like we see in Somalia, are very dangerous places, which is precisely why we do believe it is so important to have this orderly, sustained process, because we think it is the best antidote about giving extremists and terrorist groups the opportunity to make inroads.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Well, the article that I was looking at yesterday tends to say that this may not be the most likely course, particularly in the short term. But as we know, al-Qaeda has roots even at the highest echelons in Egypt. So you don't know of any specific, identifiable antidotes or information that you can share with regard to al-Qaeda in that region? You just identify it as a possibility.

Mr. STEINBERG. I think it is something we have to be alert to. Obviously to get into a little more detail, we would probably have to do this in a closed session. But I would say the most important thing is to be vigilant to it and to take the steps now to not to let the circumstances arise, because I feel very confident that the voices in the streets in Tahrir Square are not voices that are—voices that are looking to al-Qaeda as their salvation. So we need to make sure that they are the ones that prevail in this situation.

Mr. GRIFFIN. Thank you for that.

Chairman ROS-LEHTINEN. Thank you so much for your excellent testimony. We look forward to getting some of those questions in writing from you. And I would especially appreciate your responses

and the Department of State's responses to the U.N. overpayment issue and the refund.

Thank you so much. And this committee is now adjourned.

Thank you, sir.

[Whereupon, at 12:50 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE HEARINGS RECORD

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

February 4, 2011

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at (http://www.hcfa.house.gov/hearings.asp):**

DATE: Wednesday, February 9, 2011

TIME: Immediately following the 10:00 a.m. Organizational Meeting

SUBJECT: Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 1

WITNESSES: The Honorable Elliott Abrams
Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies
Council on Foreign Relations

The Honorable Lorne Craner
President
International Republican Institute
(Former Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor)

Dr. Robert Satloff
Executive Director
The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Wednesday* Date *February 9, 2011* Room *2172 Rayburn*

Starting Time *10:25 a.m.* Ending Time *12:48 p.m.*

Recesses [ ] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]

Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 1

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attendance sheet attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] No [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Rep. Connolly's Statements for the Record
Ranking-Member Berman's Report for the Record

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED *12:48 p.m.*

M. Gage

Mark Gage, Deputy Staff Director

Hearing/Briefing Title: Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 1

Date: February 9, 2011

Present	Member
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Christopher Smith, NJ
X	Dan Burton, IN
X	Elton Gallegly, CA
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Donald Manzullo, IL
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Ron Paul, TX
X	Mike Pence, IN
X	Joe Wilson, SC
X	Connie Mack, FL
X	Jeff Fortenberry, NE
X	Michael McCaul, TX
X	Ted Poe, TX
X	Gus M. Bilirakis, FL
X	Jean Schmidt, OH
	Bill Johnson, OH
X	David Rivera, FL
	Mike Kelly, PA
X	Tim Griffin, AK
	Tom Marino, PA
	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Ann Marie Buerkle, NY
X	Renee Ellmers, NC

Present	Member
X	Howard L. Berman, CA
X	Gary L. Ackerman, NY
X	Eni F.H. Faleomavega, AS
X	Donald M. Payne, NJ
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Eliot Engel, NY
X	Gregory Meeks, NY
X	Russ Carnahan, MO
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerry Connolly, VA
X	Ted Deutch, FL
X	Dennis Cardoza, CA
X	Ben Chandler, KY
X	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Allyson Schwartz, PA
X	Chris Murphy, CT
X	Frederica Wilson, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)

HCFA Full Committee Hearing
Recent Developments in Egypt & Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East
Wednesday February 8th & Thursday February 9th

A notable characteristic of the crowds gathered in Tahrir Square in downtown Cairo is the genuinely organic nature of their protest movement. Though the participants in this movement do not speak through a single representative, news reports indicate that a general dissatisfaction with the status quo is a common sentiment among the crowds. Despite the lack of a single leader, it appears that this nascent revolution is driven from the ground up. It would be in the United States' best interest to keep this in mind, lest other forces try to co-opt the revolution and turn it into an unrecognizable entity.

A few days after the protests in Egypt began, the euphoria of the mass movement morphed into something with a more chaotic bent. News reports surfaced of pro-government groups attacking protestors and individuals attacking journalists in Tahrir Square. The U.S. State Department urged American tourists and non-essential U.S. personnel to leave Egypt. U.S. Government representatives rightfully condemned violence against peaceful protestors and reiterated the right of peaceably assembled groups to protest.

U.S. responses to the above-mentioned situations were sensible. But in determining how to act with regard to the movement writ large, we are in a difficult position. If the U.S. Government is too vocal in supporting the anti-Mubarak group, then we lead credence to the false conspiracy theory that the U.S. is behind the uprising. This hurts the cause of the true pro-democracy protestors who only want a positive change for their country. This is a nuance that official representatives of the U.S. Government are compelled to keep in mind. It can certainly be a burden to have a position of authority and not be able to fully utilize it publicly.

There are other issues to consider as well, such as the potential for Egypt to remain an anchor of stability in a volatile region following a regime change. Concerns also have been raised about Egypt's current capacity for fair and free elections and a democratic transition. Currently, it is unclear who would step forward if President Mubarak were to step down. There are fears that extremist, ideological elements will co-opt the government—a fear which President Mubarak has partly cultivated by repressing moderates and centrists, such as Ghad Party leader Ayman Nour, among others. There is the question of the future of American aid to Egypt as well, in light of recent events.

The multitude of issues that come with the potential upheaval in Egypt displays the prominence of U.S. interests there. The future of Egypt is an issue that several players, including Egyptians, are considering. I look forward to exploring these and other issues in today's hearing. Thank you, Madam Chairman.

IFES BRIEFING PAPER, "ELECTIONS IN EGYPT: KEY CHALLENES FOR CREDIBLE AND COMPETITIVE ELECTIONS," SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD BY THE HONORABLE HOWARD L. BERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Background

As the situation in Egypt continues to evolve on a day-by-day basis, Egyptian authorities acknowledge they must address important issues for reform. It is becoming obvious that elections will play a key role in political developments in Egypt over the next several months. Although President Mubarak has begun the process of appointing a new government and pledged to initiate constitutional reform before stepping down from the presidency, it remains to be seen what response will be forthcoming from the protestors, the opposition parties, opposition figures, and other influential groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood.

In calls for Egyptian elections to be credible and competitive, the U.S. Government and European institutions have indicated that the international community is willing to support democratic elections in Egypt. Indeed, U.S. Secretary of State Clinton stated 'We want to see free and fair elections and we expect that this will be one of the outcomes of what is going on...an orderly, peaceful transition to real democracy, not faux democracy, like the elections we saw in Iran two years ago.'[1] However, it is still unclear the extent to which Egyptian authorities are willing to accept international engagement in the electoral process.

While there has been a wealth of discussion about political developments in Egypt and the political fate of President Mubarak, the National Democratic Party (NDP), and the opposition, there has been little focus yet on the key issues that may emerge in relation to the conduct of these next elections. In this briefing paper, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, which has worked in Egypt since 2005, provides a preliminary overview of these issues and an assessment of the electoral framework in Egypt, with particular focus on presidential elections. IFES recognizes that credible transitional elections can take place in countries that have flawed electoral frameworks if there is the political will and public support for elections to succeed. The question remains whether this will be the case in Egypt in 2011.

Forthcoming Elections in Egypt

Timetable

The following table depicts scheduled (and recent) elections for Egypt:

	NEXT SCHEDULED	MOST RECENT
PRESIDENTIAL	September 2011	September 2005
[illegible]	2012	2008
[illegible]	2013	June 2010
[illegible]	2015	November/December 2010

In addition, referendums to approve amendments to the Constitution were held in 2005 and 2007. A further referendum will be needed to approve any constitutional amendments before the 2011 presidential election.

[1] Los Angeles Times, February 4, 2010, "Clinton: Egypt must Transition to Democracy." http://www.latimes.com/news/la-fgw-egypt-clinton-20110131,0,552916.story?track=rss&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+latimes%2Fmostviewed+%28L.A.+Times+-+Most+Viewed+Stories%29

Presidential elections

The President serves a six-year term of office. Currently, there are no limitations on the number of presidential terms a candidate can serve.

Constitutional amendments in 2005 introduced contested presidential elections to Egypt. Further amendments setting additional requirements for presidential candidates were passed by referendum in 2007:

- An independent candidate or a candidate from a party that does not have a seat in Parliament must have the support of at least 250 elected members of the People's Assembly, the Shura Council and municipal councils, including at least 65 members of the People's Assembly, 25 members of the Shura Council, and 10 members of every local council in at least 14 governorates.
- Alternatively, for presidential elections held before May 2017, a party that has won at least one seat in the People's Assembly or the Shura Council in the most recent elections may nominate as a presidential candidate a person who has been a member of its board for at least one year. (After 2017, a party will have to be at least five years old and will have to win at least 3% of the seats in both the People's Assembly and the Shura Council).

The first requirement makes it highly unlikely that there could ever be an independent presidential candidate or a candidate from a non-parliamentary party. The second requirement covers seven parties[2] that won seats in the People's Assembly and one additional party that won a seat in the Shura Council in the mid-term 2010 elections.

In his speech on February 1, President Mubarak announced that he would propose constitutional amendments 'concerning the conditions on running for the presidency,' including setting a limitation on the number of terms a president may serve. No further details have been revealed. The procedure for amending the Constitution is outlined below.

Presidential succession

Egypt's Constitution has the following provisions for presidential succession between elections:

- If the President resigns, dies or is permanently disabled, the Speaker of the People's Assembly (or if the Assembly has been dissolved, the President of the Supreme Constitutional Court) becomes President temporarily. A presidential election must then be held within 60 days. The temporary President may not be a candidate in that election.
- If the President is unable to carry out his functions due to a 'temporary obstacle', he may delegate his powers to the Vice President (or to the Prime Minister if there is no Vice President). It appears that the President is the sole judge of whether a temporary obstacle exists.

In both these cases, the temporary president does not have the power to propose amendments to the Constitution, dissolve the People's Assembly or the Shura Council, or dismiss the Cabinet.

There is much debate about the possibility of holding elections within 60 days if there is a vacancy in the presidency. However, there are no clear powers in the Constitution to delay a presidential election beyond its scheduled occurrence. It is also worth noting that the State of Emergency Law does not contain provisions to allow for postponement of a presidential election.

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[2] The seven parties are: National Democratic Party, New Wafd Party, Tagammu, Al-Geel, Al-Ghad, Democratic Peace Party, Social Justice Party.

Parliamentary elections

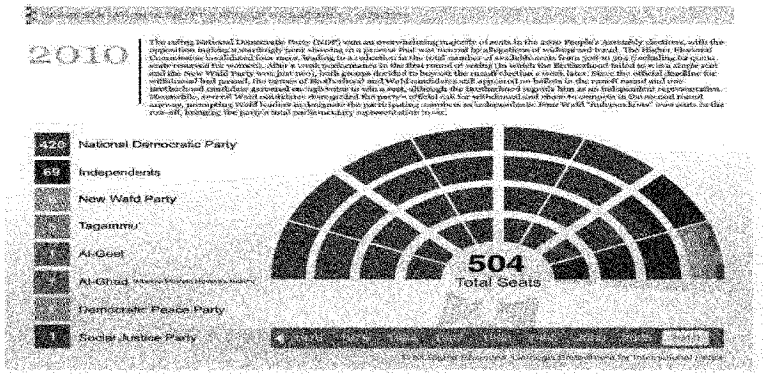
People's Assembly

Members of the People's Assembly (PA) are elected for five-year terms. There are 518 seats in the PA, including 508 elected members and 10 members appointed by the President. The number of elected members includes a quota of 64 seats to be filled by women.

People's Assembly elections were last held in November and December 2010. Initial balloting took place on 28 November, and run-off balloting took place on 5 December. These elections were widely viewed as deeply flawed within Egypt. Amaal Othman, the head of the Egyptian parliament's Constitutional and Legislative Affairs Committee, has been reported as stating that the Committee 'has referred 1527 appeals challenging the parliamentary election results to the Court', affecting the membership of 486 MPs.[3] It was also reported that administrative courts have nullified the elections in a number of constituencies, although it is not known when new elections will be held in those seats. Whatever the results of these appeals may be, there will continue to be serious questions about the legitimacy of the People's Assembly elected in 2010, even if no MP's membership is declared invalid by an Assembly resolution. It is therefore possible that a new President elected in September 2011 may wish to dissolve the Assembly in order that new elections may be held that are regarded as having more integrity than those in 2010.[4]

The President has the power to dissolve the assembly if deemed necessary. Should the Assembly be dissolved over a certain matter, the new Assembly cannot be dissolved for the same reason. The decision to dissolve the Parliament must include a call for elections within 60 days of the day of issuing the dissolution.

Figure 1 – Representation in Egypt's People's Assembly in 2010 parliamentary elections[5]



[3] 'Egypt's parliament admits 90% of MP memberships may be invalid', *Al Masry Al Youm*, January 22, 2011, www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/egypts-parliament-admits-90-mp-memberships-may-be-invalid, accessed February 3, 2011.

[4] 'The result of the investigation and the decision reached by the Court shall be submitted to the Assembly to decide upon the validity of the contestation within sixty days from the date of submission of the result of the investigation to the Assembly. The membership will not be deemed invalid except by a decision taken by a majority of two-thirds of the Assembly members.' (Article 93 of the Egyptian Constitution)

[5] http://egyptelections.carnegieendowment.org/2010/09/10/egypt%e2%80%99s-elections-primer

Shura Council

The Shura Council is the upper house of the Egyptian bicameral Parliament. It was created in 1980 through a constitutional amendment. Two-thirds of the members of the Shura Council are elected and one-third are appointed by the President. Once elected, members of the Shura Council serve for six years, and half the members are elected or appointed every three years. The Council's legislative powers are limited. On most matters of legislations, the People's Assembly retains the last word.

The most recent Shura Council elections were held in June 2010. The observation reports of The Egyptian Association for Supporting The Democratic Development (EASD) on the 2010 Shura Council elections mentioned various violations such as non-secret voting, unsealed ballot boxes, improper use of public resources and facilities, and the use of religious slogans in violation of the Constitution and applicable laws.[6]

Amending the Constitution

Article 189 of the Constitution stipulates the following procedural steps for amending the Constitution:

- an amendment may be requested by the President or by one-third of the members of the People's Assembly, accompanied by the reasons justifying the amendment;
- the Assembly then discusses and votes on the proposed amendment in principle;
- if a majority of the members of the Assembly rejects the amendment, no amendment to that article of the Constitution may be requested for the next 12 months;
- if a majority of the Assembly approves the amendment in principle, the proposal is considered again in detail two months later;
- if the proposed amendment is then approved by two-thirds of the members of the Assembly, it must be referred to a referendum;
- an amendment that is approved by the voters comes into effect from the day the official results of the referendum are announced.

The Constitution does not specify a timeframe in which the referendum must be held after the Assembly finally votes to approve a proposal. The constitutional referendum in March 2007 was held one week after the final Assembly vote.

The minimum time for holding a constitutional referendum from introduction in parliament to a vote by the people appears to be about ten weeks based on the chronologies of multiple referenda over the last 20 years.

It is worth noting that the current members of the Assembly, many of whose own legitimacy is still in question due to pending challenges which potentially affect their membership (mentioned above in the section on the People's Assembly), will play a central role in approving the precise wording of any amendment to the Constitution to be put to the voters, including any constitutional changes to be made before the 2011 presidential election. Although it is not specified in the Constitution, it seems that the Assembly could decide to try to increase perceptions of the legitimacy of the legal framework by establishing a consultative mechanism to allow input on the proposed amendments from constitutional experts, parties not represented in the Assembly, and civil society, even though this could take additional time.

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[6] The Egyptian Association for Supporting The Democratic Development (EASD), *Final Report : Observing Events of the Election Campaign for Shoura Council Mid–Term Elections June-2010* and *The Shura Council Reelection* (2010).

Electoral Management

Egypt has different election management structures for presidential elections on the one hand, and for parliamentary elections and referendums on the other:

- Presidential elections are governed by the Constitution and Law No. 174 for 2005 On Regulating the Presidential Elections which provides that these elections will be held under the supervision of the 10-member independent Presidential Elections Commission (PEC), chaired by the head of the Supreme Constitutional Court. The other members are four senior judges and five impartial public figures, three of whom are nominated by the People's Assembly and two by the Shura Council. The Constitution specifically provides that the PEC's decisions are final and are not subject to jucicial review.
- Due to a constitutional amendment from 2007, other elections and referendums are held under the supervision of the independent High Elections Commission (HEC) whose detailed mandate is set by Law 73 for 1956 On Exercising of Political Rights. The HEC is chaired by the Head of the Cairo Court of Appeals and includes three other serving judges. The seven other members are chosen by the People's Assembly and the Shura Council and include three former judges and four public figures.

The Ministry of Interior carries out the major operational tasks for all elections and referendums, theoretically under the supervision of the PEC or the HEC as the case may be. However the ability of the PEC and HEC to carry out their supervisory responsibilities is severely limited by their lack of expertise and executive capacity. The role of the Ministry in elections does little to boost public confidence in the integrity of the process – not least because it also houses the security forces and the police, neither of which enjoys wide public support.

The PEC and HEC appoint committees at various levels to conduct elections and referendums. It is likely that some of the violations and irregularities that occurred during the 2010 Shura Council elections (e.g. non-secret voting, unsealed ballot boxes, improper use of public resources and facilities, and the use of religious slogans in violation of the Constitution and applicable laws[7]) and the 2010 Assembly elections (e.g. voter intimidation, vote buying, ballot stuffing, failure to identify voters, and denial of access to polling stations[8])were the result of inadequate training of committee members. The EASD report on the PA elections also identified a number of logistical problems at polling stations, such as lack of transparent ballot boxes, and no supplies of the indelible ink mandated by Article 29/Law 73 which is to be used during elections and referendum to prevent double voting.

Before the 2000 PA elections, the Constitutional Court ruled that Article 88 of the Constitution required the presence of a judge at each ballot box. This was implemented for the 2000 and 2005 PA elections and was regarded as reducing fraud at those elections.[9] Because of logistical difficulties, the amendments to the Constitution approved in 2007 included removing the requirement for a judicial presence at each ballot box.

Suffrage

Egyptian citizens age 18 and over are eligible to register to vote in public elections and referenda. Egyptian citizens who cannot vote include members of the military, the police force, prisoners, and "those with mental diseases who are detained." In 2005, approximately 32 million voters were registered to vote, while 10 million eligible

[7] The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development (EASD), *Final Report : Observing Events of the Election Campaign for Shoura Council Mid-Term Elections June-2010* and *The Shura Council Reelection* (2010).
[8] The Egyptian Association for Supporting Democratic Development (EASD), *Report on the End of Parliamentary Election Voting and Counting Proceedings* (2010).
[9] Democracy Reporting International (DRI), *Assessment of the Electoral Framework, Final Report: The Arab Republic of Egypt* (2007), p. 27..

voters (or 25%) remained unregistered.[10] However, voter turnout for the 2005 elections was extremely low, with only 23% of registered voters taking part in the presidential election and just over 28% for the PA elections. The government estimated turnout in the 2010 PA elections at 25%, although observers from the Egyptian Association for the Support of Democracy estimated turnout at 10-15%.[11]

Voter turnout in recent constitutional referendums has also been very low. Official turnout for the 2005 referendum was 54%, although another estimate put turnout at 3-5%. Official turnout at the 2007 referendum was 27%, with 76% of those who voted approving the amendments.[12]

By law, non-voters can be fined, although this is not enforced. A massive 63% of the respondents in a 2009 Al Ahram Center survey said they did not have the voter's card normally needed to vote, with more than half of those saying they were not interested in the electoral process.[13] The most common reason for voter apathy, cited by 35% of those who had not voted at an election from 2005 to 2008, was 'elections useless/disinterest/distrust'.

Women participate at a much lower rate than men. The ACPSS survey showed that only 21% of women said they voted in the 2005 PA elections compared to 49% of men, and only 13% of women voted in that year's presidential election compared to 40% of men.[14]

Voter Registration

Law 73/1956 On Exercising Political Rights and its executive regulations detail the methodology and responsibility for registering voters.

Egypt has adopted a permanent voter registration system, which is administered by the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). Citizens born after 1982 are added automatically to the voters lists. The registers are updated annually over a three month period, normally starting from November 1st and proceeding through January 31st of the following year, followed by a challenge and appeal period; however because the PA elections were held in November and December 2010, the voter registration period is currently scheduled to run through 8 March 2011. During the update period, eligible voters must go to the nearest police station to register their names in voters lists or to correct their details. The voters lists are final once the call for an election or referendum has been issued.

A registered voter must go to a police station to obtain his or her voter's card; this can be done at any time during the year. Voters should present their voter's card along with their Identity Card on Election Day.

During a presidential election, voters present at a city, town or village other than that where their name is registered may cast their vote at any polling station where they are present, provided that they produce proof of identity to the head of the election committee This law does not state what proof of identity is required for a voter who votes in a presidential election at the polling station where s/he is registered. The PEC sets the rules and procedure to be adopted in this regard.

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[10] Democracy Reporting International (DRI), *Assessment of the Electoral Framework, Final Report: The Arab Republic of Egypt* (2007), p. 31.
[11] 'Egyptian Observers track the conduct of parliamentary elections', www.ndi.org/print/16856, accessed January 5, 2011.
[12] Democracy Reporting International (DRI), *Assessment of the Electoral Framework, Final Report: The Arab Republic of Egypt* (2007), pp. 11, 15.
[13] Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS), Survey Results of Citizens' Attitudes to Political Participation (2009), p.13.
[14] Ibid.

On casting their votes for a referendum or a national election other than a presidential election, voters are required to present their voting card to the station's committee, and to identify themselves to the committee by any means. Those who have lost their voting cards are allowed to cast their votes as long as their names are on the electoral lists of the polling station.

The current voter registration system has a number of problems which have been cited by domestic observers. These include, but are not limited to, issues such as: registration in multiple constituencies; voter lists which include the deceased, criminals and members of the military and police force; and confusion on election day due to voters with identical names.

Political Party Registration

The political party law was created by Law 40 for 1977 Concerning the Political Parties System, and was amended by Law 177/2005. The constitutional prohibition against the creation of political parties along religious lines does not meet the threshold outlined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Egypt ratified in 1982.

The nine-member Political Party Committee (PPC), is the official body responsible for managing political party affairs in Egypt. The PPC is headed by the Speaker of the Shura Counci,l and its members include the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs. The other six members (three former senior judges and three individuals who are not associated with political parties) are appointed by the People's Assembly. The lack of formal independence has been further compounded by the NDP's dominance of the selection and nomination processes of the PPC.

The decisions of the PPC can be appealed to the courts. Indeed, the courts have reversed many of the PPC's decisions in the past. Additionally, while the PPC is allowed to impose a temporary suspension of a party's activities, it has to seek the decision of the court in order to dissolve any political party.

Election Observation

Law No. 174 for the year 2005 *On Regulating the Presidential Elections* does not contain any provisions concerning domestic observation of those elections. On the presidential election day in 2005, however, the head of the PEC approved local observation by those who had obtained the necessary permits from the PEC, but this decision was not communicated to many of the judges at the polling stations. This flawed decision-making process guaranteed that observation could not be widespread or effective.

There was domestic observation of the 2005 and the 2010 Shura and Assembly elections. In 2005, NGOs reported difficulties with the accreditation process, and that security forces denied some accredited observers access to polling and counting stations. In 2007 the HEC issued Decision No. 4/2007 entitled 'On Civil Society Election Monitoring Authorization' which authorized the National Council of Human Rights (NCHR)[15] to receive accreditation applications from civil society organizations (CSOs) that wished to monitor the elections, while also leaving it open to CSOs to apply directly to the HEC for accreditation. It is likely that similar arrangements would be made covering domestic observation of a constitutional referendum

Before the 2010 PA elections, NCHR indicated that there was no need for international observation of the Egyptian elections as the Council together with local CSOs would be able to do so. No information has been available on whether there were similar problems in 2010 as had been reported in previous elections.

[15] NCHR was created by Law Number 94.

There has never been international observation of Egypt's presidential elections.

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence is common during Egyptian elections,[16] and there were reports of occurrences at the November 2010 PA elections.[17] This violence varies from tribal in the coastal areas to familial in the Sa'id (upper Egypt) and South areas. Some observers have also noted that the government has, in previous elections, used security concerns to justify creating security cordons and preventing opposition voters from accessing polling stations.[18]

Election Complaints and Disputes

As in the case of electoral management in Egypt, there is a two-track electoral dispute resolution mechanism, one for presidential elections and another for other elections.

Under Law 174 for 2005, the Presidential Election Commission (PEC) is charged with election dispute resolution in the case of presidential elections, and both complaints and appeals must be submitted to it. The Constitution and Law 174/2005 state that the PEC's decisions are final and cannot be appealed, even to the highest court in Egypt, i.e. the Supreme Constitutional Court.[19]

With regard to all other elections and referendums, there are three main avenues for complaints – administrative, judicial and parliamentary: *(a) Administrative* – Under Law 73 for 1956, the HEC has the mandate to receive complaints about irregularities in electoral operations that precede voting and the declaration of results. *(b) Judicial* - The Administrative Courts also have jurisdiction over electoral operations prior to the declaration of a winner, including appeals against voter registration decisions and removal of candidates from the list of candidates as Law 73 for 1956 requires the HEC to seek the approval prior to the removal of candidates for gross violation of electoral law. The Constitutional Court has made a number of important electoral decisions in the past. Some commentators observe that the main reason behind the exclusion of the judiciary from exercising supervision over the presidential elections is the ability of the Constitutional Court to assert independence and some degree of neutrality. *(c) Parliamentary* - The Constitution provides that once the final results of the PA elections are declared, the validation or invalidation of the new membership falls solely within the mandate of the People's Assembly. A similar procedure is followed for appeals against the election of a member of the Shura Council. However, this procedure does not seem to have been invoked successfully during the 2005 PA elections as the NCHR noted that the courts examined and made recommendations in relation to 90 out of over 1,000 complaints received by the Speaker, but the Assembly did not make a decision in relation to any of these 90 complaints before the 2010 elections.[20]

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[16] The Egyptian Organization of Human Rights reported that 'In 2005, 12 people were killed and 500 were injured in election related violence compared to 8 killed and 64 injured in 2000'. Cited in Democracy Reporting International (DRI), *Assessment of the Electoral Framework, Final Report: The Arab Republic of Egypt* (2007), p.16.

[17] BBC News, 'Egypt holds parliamentary poll', November 28, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-11855691, accessed November 29, 2010.

[18] See, for example, DRI, *Assessment of the Electoral Framework, Final Report: The Arab Republic of Egypt* (2007), p.16.

[19] The law goes further to state that the decisions of the PEC (including regulations) are not subject to interpretation by any other authority

[20] Three MPs (two NDP and one Muslim Brotherhood 'independent') were stripped of their membership of the People's Assembly during the 2000 parliamentary term.

FULL COMMITTEE HEARING NOTICE
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515-0128

Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-FL), Chairman

February 2, 2011

You are respectfully requested to attend an OPEN hearing of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, to be held in **Room 2172 of the Rayburn House Office Building (and available live, via the WEBCAST link on the Committee website at (http://www.hcfa.house.gov/hearings.asp):**

DATE: Thursday, February 10, 2011

TIME: 10:30 a.m.

SUBJECT: Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 2

WITNESS: The Honorable James B. Steinberg
Deputy Secretary
U.S. Department of State

By Direction of the Chairman

The Committee on Foreign Affairs seeks to make its facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. If you are in need of special accommodations, please call 202/225-5021 at least four business days in advance of the event, whenever practicable. Questions with regard to special accommodations in general (including availability of Committee materials in alternative formats and assistive listening devices) may be directed to the Committee.

COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

MINUTES OF FULL COMMITTEE HEARING

Day *Thursday* **Date** *February 10, 2011* **Room** *2172 Rayburn*

Starting Time *10:35 a.m.* **Ending Time** *12:52 p.m.*

Recesses [ ] (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____) (____to ____)

Presiding Member(s)

Chairman Ileana Ros-Lehtinen

Check all of the following that apply:

Open Session [✓]
Executive (closed) Session [ ]
Televised [✓]
Electronically Recorded (taped) [✓]
Stenographic Record [✓]

TITLE OF HEARING:

Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 2

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

Attendance sheet attached

NON-COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

HEARING WITNESSES: Same as meeting notice attached? Yes [✓] **No** [ ]
(If "no", please list below and include title, agency, department, or organization.)

STATEMENTS FOR THE RECORD: *(List any statements submitted for the record.)*

Rep. Joe Wilson's Opening Remarks
Rep. Russ Carnahan's Opening Remarks
Rep. Russ Carnahan's Questions for the Record
Chairman Ros-Lehtinen's Questions for the Record

TIME SCHEDULED TO RECONVENE _____
or
TIME ADJOURNED _____

Mark Gage, Deputy Staff Director

Hearing/Briefing Title: Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon: implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East, Part 2

Date: February 10, 2011

Present	Member
X	Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, FL
X	Christopher Smith, NJ
X	Dan Burton, IN
X	Elton Gallegly, CA
X	Dana Rohrabacher, CA
X	Donald Manzullo, IL
X	Edward R. Royce, CA
X	Steve Chabot, OH
	Ron Paul, TX
X	Mike Pence, IN
X	Joe Wilson, SC
	Connie Mack, FL
X	Jeff Fortenberry, NE
	Michael McCaul, TX
	Ted Poe, TX
X	Gus M. Bilirakis, FL
X	Jean Schmidt, OH
	Bill Johnson, OH
X	David Rivera, FL
	Mike Kelly, PA
X	Tim Griffin, AK
X	Tom Marino, PA
X	Jeff Duncan, SC
X	Ann Marie Buerkle, NY
	Renee Ellmers, NC

Present	Member
X	Howard L. Berman, CA
X	Gary L. Ackerman, NY
X	Eni F.H. Faleomavega, AS
	Donald M. Payne, NJ
X	Brad Sherman, CA
X	Eliot Engel, NY
X	Gregory Meeks, NY
X	Russ Carnahan, MO
X	Albio Sires, NJ
X	Gerry Connolly, VA
X	Ted Deutch, FL
X	Dennis Cardoza, CA
	Ben Chandler, KY
X	Brian Higgins, NY
X	Allyson Schwartz, PA
X	Chris Murphy, CT
X	Frederica Wilson, FL
X	Karen Bass, CA
X	William Keating, MA
X	David Cicilline, RI

OPENING STATEMENT OF
THE HONORABLE RUSS CARNAHAN (MO-03)
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS
U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Hearing on
Recent Developments in Egypt and Lebanon:
Implications for U.S. Policy and Allies in the Broader Middle East
February 9-10, 2011
2172 Rayburn House Office Building

Chairman Ros-Lehtinen and Ranking Member Berman, thank you for holding this hearing regarding the political situation in Egypt and Lebanon. Given the level of uncertainty in both countries and throughout the Middle East and North Africa, I appreciate the very timely attention that is being given to this topic.

Beginning in mid-December, popular uprisings broke out in Tunisia, igniting latent anti-government, pro-reform movements in important countries like Yemen, Jordan, Algeria, and most significantly, in Egypt. Moreover, with UN indictments for the assassination of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri approaching, the March 14th-led government has dissolved, resulting in the appointment of Hezbollah-backed Makati to Prime Minister. I am deeply concerned about these developments.

It is clear that the situation throughout the region—and certainly in Egypt—is very fluid, dynamic, and poses significant foreign policy challenges for the United States. For the past several decades, Egypt has been an important ally in the Arab-Israeli conflict and in our counterterrorism efforts. Yet, as the Egyptian people call for reforms, it is important that we stand up for fundamental values of democracy, universal freedom, and human rights. I would like to hear recommendations from the panel witnesses on the best approach for the U.S. to support an Egyptian-led transition process, while seeking to retain a relationship with this country that has been a pillar of our foreign policy in the region.

With regard to Lebanon, as Mr. Makati attempts to formulate a new government, many questions remain. I hope the panelists will shed light on effective strategies for the U.S. to minimize Hezbollah's influence. I am also interested in the prospects for the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the U.S.'s role in supporting the tribunal. In Lebanon, Egypt, and throughout the region, I think the question facing the U.S. is how we should effectively and appropriately support values of democracy and human rights, while also ensuring out national security interests. In my view, these goals are not mutually exclusive and, in fact, can support one another. I look forward to hearing the panelists' recommendations on this question.

In closing, I'd like to thank the panelists for their testimonies and presence before the committee. I hope that your answers and opinions will further our understanding of challenges facing Egypt, Lebanon, and U.S. foreign policy in the region moving forward.

Opening Statement for Congressman Joe Wilson

Egypt and Lebanon

House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 9 and 10, 2011

Madame Chairman, congratulations on your achievement. I have always appreciated your enthusiasm and competence. I would like to thank you for calling this important hearing today on Egypt. With the recent events the world has been following, it is imperative that we continue to better understand the situation as it has the potential for negative reverberations across the entire Middle East.

As a member of this Committee and the Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia, ably lead by Chairman Steve Chabot (OH), I am uneasy with the events surrounding the current administration in Egypt. Mr. Mubarak's announcement to not seek re-election was the first step in moving towards a democratically elected government. Now, the Egyptian government should take steps to initiate true political reform by scheduling a legitimate and democratic election to be carried out sooner rather than later. Leaders of the opposition movement must not embrace extremist elements who are merely attempting to gain power as a means to establish an authoritarian regime. Continuing unrest only opens up the potential for such extremists to move in and seize control.

This political reform must happen quickly so as to preserve an orderly and peaceful transition. Having heard the discontent and seen citizens take to the streets, it would be in the best interest for the people of Egypt to be afforded a venue free from violence to voice their concerns regarding the government. The violence, which has spread to all parts of Egypt, with many lives lost, must be stopped in order to legitimize the process leading to a free and fair election.

The citizens of Egypt have spoken. They are seeking a democratically elected government. Mr. Mubarak's administration should see to it that the will of the people is satisfied sooner rather than later.

Thank you again for calling this hearing. I am eager to hear from our distinguished witnesses.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Secretary James Steinberg
Chairwoman Ros-Lehtinen (#1 - #9)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 10, 2011

Question (#1a - 1b):

You state in your written testimony that "we must be mindful of the challenges that come with transitions…they can lead to chaos and new forms of intolerance, or backslide into authoritarianism…we want to create durable democracies, which is why we are working, wherever we can, to ensure that political transitions are deliberate, inclusive, and transparent."

What specific regional plans and contingencies have been developed to implement these policies?

Answer:

Our Ambassadors and Embassies across the region are fully engaged in the issue and are monitoring the situation in their host countries. We have made clear our commitment to universal human rights, freedom of expression, and the promotion of democratic principles. Recent events reaffirm the importance of our assistance efforts in the region, particularly those efforts in support of economic opportunity and civil society. We continue to engage emerging leaders, provide grants to groups working to advance human rights on the ground, and speak out when governments abuse the human rights of their citizens.

Through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), we have the flexibility to meet emergent civil society needs such as those in Tunisia and Egypt. Using FY2010 ESF, MEPI is providing $7.5 million in local grants directly to indigenous civil society organizations across the region. These grants empower local agents of change, engage youth constructively in politics, and hold governments accountable for their commitments to reform. MEPI has also notified Congress of our intent to devote $20 million in FY 2010 and FY 2011 funding to support the Tunisian transition to democracy. This funding allows us to support indigenous efforts to address popular dissatisfaction with regional governments, and promote peaceful reform.

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) continues to support innovative programs that are addressing civil society needs in both Egypt and Tunisia. Specifically, DRL currently funds programs that focus on independent journalism, independent trade unions, political parties, and youth leadership in Egypt, and will soon fund five new programs, and another Egyptian civil society initiative which will bring total DRL support for Egypt programs to $6.6 million. In Tunisia, DRL funds a program at $400,000 that promotes the use of media in increasing women's involvement in Tunisian politics by building the capacity of local civil society and improving the technical abilities of university students. DRL plans to cost

amend this program and is currently working with the implementing partner to expand objectives and activities in response to the evolving situation in Tunisia.

Contingency funding and regional funds that provide us flexibility for exactly these situations is critical so that we do not have to divert funding from other priority ongoing projects. These kinds of capabilities – such as the Middle East Partnership, elections assistance funds and the Complex Crises Fund – are critical and we need to maintain this funding.

Question 1c:

Has the Administration raised or pursued with Egypt the registration of foreign NGOs—such as IRI and NDI—so that they can provide in-country training and support for the transitional period?

Answer:

We have repeatedly urged the Egyptian government to allow Egyptian and foreign NGOs to operate freely and receive funding. This includes urging Egyptian authorities to register U.S. NGOs operating in the country. These efforts played an important role in the recent GOE registrations of the American Bar Association (October 2010) and the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (December 2010). We continue to urge Egyptian authorities to register NDI and IRI, among others, and to allow their

groups with appropriate expertise can provide support for Egypt's anticipated elections.

Question(2):

In your written testimony, you stated that "we have set out key principles — publicly and privately— to ensure that the transition remains peaceful… Suppression is not going to be a solution to the challenges facing Egypt."

Has the Administration developed a key set of criteria for persons and parties involved in the process—and their eligibility for US support? Please elaborate.

Answer:

In accordance with Congressional mandate, we cannot direct funding or assistance to particular parties or individuals. The magnitude of political change that is occurring in Egypt will open the door to new opportunities to encourage and influence Egypt's democratic development. We are focused on supporting a democratic process, and will use the tools at our disposal, such as Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) programs and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), as well as USAID, to target and strengthen a broad range of civil society actors. However, we have consistently outlined key principles, such as rejecting violence and supporting universal human rights, which undergird U.S. assistance; Egyptian organizations and individuals that represent and encourage those

Question(3):

You stated in your written testimony that "we are urging Egypt's government, opposition, and civil society to engage in serious and inclusive negotiations to arrive at a timetable, game plan, and pathway to constitutional and political reforms."

Would this include the Muslim Brotherhood?

Answer:

Egypt's interim government has engaged with a broad range of opposition and civil society groups in serious and inclusive negotiations, including the Muslim Brotherhood (MB). We would expect that any organization or individual that adheres to the principles of democracy, including the principle of non-violence, should be able to participate in this process. The MB disavowed violence in the 1970s. It has stated its intention to establish a new political party, but has also announced that it would neither run a candidate for President nor seek a majority in parliament.

Question (#4a):

Deputy Secretary Steinberg, you state in your written testimony "we remain committed to the goals of Resolution 1701, including the establishment of the LAF as the sole armed force in Lebanon." You then state that "the fact that we continue to plan for assistance through FY2012 is an incentive to the next Lebanese government to protect the LAF's independence as a national institution serving all Lebanese, but we will follow developments closely in connection with our future support."

Would you agree that Hezbollah's ability to influence Lebanese government decisions on the critical issues of disarmament and halting the flow of weapons is itself a violation of not only UNSCR 1701, but UNSCR 1559 as well?

Answer:

We remain concerned about the transfer of illegal arms from Iran and Syria to Hizballah – which we consider a direct contravention of UNSCRs 1559 and 1701. We are strongly advocating for the next government to live up to its international obligations under UNSCR 1559, 1680, 1701, and 1757 and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. When the new government is formed, we will closely monitor and evaluate its behavior and the extent of Hizballah's political influence related to Lebanon's performance in meeting these obligations. Currently, we are closely monitoring all planned US assistance to the LAF and will continue to implement existing safeguards designed to ensure that U.S. funded items are used only for their intended purpose.

Question(4b):

Has the State Department evaluated whether Lebanon now meets the statutory definition of a state-sponsor of terrorism or terrorist sanctuary given Hezbollah's control of the government?

Answer:

PM-designate Mikati is still in the process of forming his government. We do not yet know what role Hizballah will have in that government, either directly or indirectly. When the new government is formed, we will review its composition, policies and behavior. We will judge Lebanon's next government by its actions.

Question(4c):

What is the Administration's stance on continuing to provide assistance to such a Lebanese government?

Answer:

When the new government is formed, we will review its composition, policies, and behavior. Since this government has not yet been formed, it is premature to judge the next government and make any determinations about the future of U.S. assistance to Lebanon. It is important that we continue to plan for ongoing assistance through FY 2012 in order to leave all options open.

Currently, we are closely monitoring U.S. assistance to the LAF and will continue to implement existing safeguards designed to ensure that U.S. funded items are used only for their intended purpose.

Question(5a):

What is your analysis of both the short-term and long-term implications of the current events on the region as well as the outside world's relations with the main players in the Middle East?

Answer:

We are hopeful that this period of transition will lead to governments that will be good partners with the U.S. Our Ambassadors and Embassy officials across the region maintain an active outreach to both governments and elements of civil society. State and USAID programs buttress this outreach and build strong ties to citizens in these countries. Rule of law and anticorruption projects remain key components of good governance programs and efforts to combat transnational criminal and extremist networks.

While each country is unique, the events in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya underscore the point that it is critical to address the widespread social, economic, and political challenges facing the region.

Question(5b):

How is the Administration's broader policy being refined to reflect these new realities, and anticipate further changes?

Answer:

We have made clear to regional governments the importance of adhering to universally recognized human rights, refraining from the use of violence, and responding to the legitimate needs and aspirations of their people. While each country faces its own unique political situation, the people of the region have made clear their desire to seek human dignity and freedom.

We have seen some governments take positive steps to address the legitimate grievances of the people. We will work to hold these governments accountable for their commitments to reform. We continue to call upon governments, as well as protesters, to refrain from the use of violence.

Recent events reaffirm the importance of our assistance efforts in the region, particularly those efforts in support of economic opportunity and civil society. It is in our interest to support those countries undergoing a democratic transition and do all that we can to help them succeed.

Question(5c):

What preemptive moves are regional governments and regimes taking in response to the events in Egypt, Lebanon and elsewhere?

Answer:

We have seen a number of governments take responsive steps to initiate reforms. Morocco's King Mohammed has fast-tracked his reform agenda to include social and economic measures, as well as a national referendum on constitutional amendments that would devolve some more power to elected officials. Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said has expanded the legislative authority of the elected Consultative Council, appointed members of the Council to lead ministries, and instituted an independent prosecutor's office.

We welcome these reforms, and we hope that these governments continue moving forward to address the needs and concerns of their people. We urge other governments of the region to follow their example.

Question(5d):

Given the events in Egypt, will the Administration increase its support for Iran's democratic opposition? Please elaborate.

Answer:

We will continue to stand up for those rights that are universal to all human beings. In this, we are joined by many other nations around the world.

We assess that the Green Movement is an organic civic movement, rather than a political party. Its organic Iranian character is critical to its strength and credibility. While we do not fund political parties, movements or factions, the State Department and USAID continue to support projects to help Iranians exercise their universal rights, and help Iranian civil society make its voice heard and pursue greater freedoms, accountability, transparency, and the rule of law.

Question(6):

Ambassador Frank Wisner, Obama Special Envoy to Egypt, has been criticized for being too close Mubarak, and remarking during a security conference in Munich that "Mubarak must stay in office in order to steer those changes through. This is an ideal moment for him to show the way forward."

What was Ambassador Wisner's specific mandate by the Administration?

What tasks and duties were assigned to him? Please elaborate.

Answer:

Ambassador Wisner was asked to travel to Egypt in early February to add his perspective to our analysis on developments there. While in Cairo, he met with now former President Mubarak and former Vice President Omar Suleiman. Upon his return, Ambassador Wisner briefed Secretary Clinton on February 3. Subsequently, Ambassador Wisner attended the Munich conference and spoke as a private citizen. His views were his own. He was not speaking on behalf of the U.S. government.

Question(#7):

What actions is the Administration taking or considering taking to ensure that U.S. and foreign NGOs are permitted to perform in-country training for potential candidates, observe the elections, and conduct other activities?

Given the registration difficulties that organizations such as IRI and NDI have encountered, what are we doing to ensure that their activities will not be constrained by the current or a transitional government?

Answer:

Egypt's process of democratic transition is still in its early stages. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) has indicated its desire to hand over power to a democratically-elected government. There are numerous steps to be taken, including necessary constitutional and legislative reforms to ensure that this transition is credible, lasting, and irreversible. We also continue to encourage the SCAF to adopt an inclusive and transparent approach in managing this process. We continue to urge Egyptian authorities to allow the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute to operate as NGOs in Egypt. Both organizations have consultants currently in country working with political parties and civil society and are actively moving forward with local partners.

Question(#8a):

What is the Administration's contingency plan for dealing with the potential for widespread or concentrated electoral violence following the transitional period?

Answer:

We continue to monitor closely developments in Egypt. The magnitude of political change that was the result of peaceful demonstrations should not be underestimated. However, the situation remains fluid. We will monitor the conduct of future elections, as well as the security situation. As the President has repeatedly stated, the democratic transition in Egypt must be irreversible. We continue to urge all sides to remain peaceful in their efforts to build on the gains that have been made in this nascent democratic transition.

Question(8b):

Given the breadth of the constitutional and administrative changes necessary to fulfill this requirement, what is the specific timetable that the Administration is examining to make these changes possible?

Answer:

Egypt's transition to democracy is just beginning. As you rightly note, there are numerous constitutional, administrative, and legislative changes that will need to occur to ensure that this change is lasting and

irreversible. The process must be led by the Egyptian people themselves, but we are ready to provide the necessary assistance, as requested.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), under the leadership of Field Marshal and Minister of Defense Mohamed Tantawi, assumed control of the Egyptian government following the announcement of President Mubarak's resignation on February 11. Upon taking leadership, the SCAF indicated its desire to hand over power to a democratically-elected government after parliamentary and presidential elections. In the interim period, the SCAF said it would rule by decree in the absence of a legislature due to the dissolution of both houses of parliament. Since that time, the SCAF, named new cabinet ministers, and appointed members to a constitutional committee, led by a retired judge with a reputation for his independent views, charged with studying possible constitutional amendments. This constitutional committee proposed constitutional changes that were voted on in a March 19 referendum, and were approved by more than 70% of voters. We will encourage the SCAF and the Egyptian people to work together to determine an appropriate timeline that will allow a meaningful, orderly transition to democracy. Ultimately, the specific timing of the transition is for Egyptians to decide.

Question(9a):

What is the Administration's view on continuing security assistance to Egypt for stability and compliance with its international commitments, and preparation for democratic transition?

Answer:

The Egyptian military – a recipient of significant U.S. assistance -- has a critical role in events in Egypt, and so far it has acted responsibly, protecting the right of peaceful assembly, earning the trust of the population, and, ultimately, assuming the senior-most leadership role in the interim government. We welcome the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces' announcement that it is committed to a democratic civilian transition and will stand by Egypt's international obligations.

Our annual request and Congress' annual appropriation of $1.3 billion in Foreign Military Financing (FMF) assists Egypt in maintaining a strong and disciplined defense force, which is imperative at this time, and critical to ensuring Egypt's continued role as a regional leader able to act as a moderating influence and contribute actively to the resolution of regional conflicts. Our military funding has its roots in the Camp David accords.

All equipment provided to Egyptian forces under the FMF program is covered by end-use restrictions and conditions, which ensure transparency

by requiring Egypt to grant the U.S. government full access to provided equipment to monitor how it is being used.

In addition, established State Department procedures for implementing the Leahy Amendment are applied to ensure that units receiving security assistance have committed gross violations of human rights. We have no evidence to suggest that any military goods procured through our aid programs have been used inappropriately during the past demonstrations.

Question(9b):

What is the Administration's view on simultaneously transferring economic aid currently going to the Mubarak government to pro-democracy groups for organizing and preparing for elections?

Answer:

Our economic assistance package to Egypt, $250 million annually, is not only an important component of our bilateral relations, but will reinforce our positive and serious commitments to assist Egypt's democratic transition. We have submitted a Congressional notification explaining our intent to reprogram $150 million in bilateral ESF to support Egypt's economic recovery and democratic transition in the immediate term.

We recognize the need, especially in the current budget environment, to consult early and often with the Congress. We look forward to working with Congress to ensure that we have the funding and authorities necessary to support the Egyptian people in this transition to provide assistance that is necessary and appropriate.

We view our economic assistance as a cornerstone of our partnership with the Egyptian people. Our development assistance over the years has contributed to economic and social development in a significant way. As Egypt faces the important task of economic recovery and providing growth to meet the demands of its people, our annual economic package will be an important symbol of our continued partnership with the Egyptian people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Secretary James Steinberg
Representative Russ Carnahan (1)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 10, 2011

Question:

Given the news we've just received that President Mubarak is expected to hand power over, it seems particularly timely to discuss the vast challenges facing Egypt in moving forward with reforms. Instituting democratic reforms will require more than holding free and fair elections, a difficult undertaking in and of itself, but real change will require undertaking much more vast transformations. Please comment on some of the main challenges Egypt is facing in democratically reforming its political processes and governing institutions. What is your view of the international community's ability to support this process? What is the appropriate role for the U.S. to lend support without seeming to overly insert itself?

Answer:

The events that transpired in Egypt in recent weeks have presented great challenges and great opportunities. Egyptian citizens protested – peacefully – calling for the establishment of a democratic system of government responsive to their needs and aspirations. This democratic transition is still, however, in its infancy. As President Obama has said, this is not the end, but the beginning of Egypt's transition. There are numerous steps that will need to be taken in this process, including enacting constitutional and legislative reforms, lifting the state of emergency, and releasing political prisoners. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces

(SCAF) is currently leading Egyptian government efforts to transition to democracy and has made clear its desire to hand over power to a democratically-elected government. In order to ensure Egypt's transition to democracy is credible, lasting, and irreversible, we have encouraged the SCAF to adopt an inclusive and transparent approach in managing this transition process.

The United States will continue to be a friend and partner of the Egyptian people, and we are prepared, as needed and requested, to support Egyptian efforts to pursue a credible and orderly transition. We are also committed to helping Egypt address the very serious economic difficulties that it currently faces, which present challenges to the country's current and future political leadership during this sensitive period. We intend, in this regard, to reprogram $150 million in bilateral ESF to support Egypt's economic recovery and democratic transition in the immediate term. These funds will help address economic dislocation resulting from recent protests as well as broader economic needs. They will also support Egyptian efforts to implement free and fair elections and to establish a responsive, accountable government that respects the universal human rights of the Egyptian people. Many of our friends and allies in the international community have expressed a similar desire to provide support to Egypt, and

we are also engaging with our colleagues at the multilateral development banks and other international financial institutions in order to explore how those institutions may also play a helpful role in Egypt.

It is our strong belief that Egypt's democratic transition must be led and determined by the Egyptian people. As this process unfolds, the U.S. government will remain in contact with a broad array of government officials, opposition activists, and civil society representatives, and will continue to review how the United States can best support the efforts and aspirations of the Egyptian people.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Secretary James Steinberg
Representative Russ Carnahan (2)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 10, 2011

Question:

Deputy Secretary Steinberg, in the coming months, Egypt faces significant challenges to institute democratic reforms. Moreover, its economy has taken a serious hit as a result of all of the unrest, and unemployment has been a large driver of the insurrection. I think most would agree that further aggravators of instability in Egypt hold potentially detrimental impacts for the entire region's stability and balance of power, which in-turn would additionally threaten our own national and economic security interests. Yet many of my Republican colleagues have proposed slashing the budgets for the State Department and USAID, from which includes our economic development and democracy assistance. Please comment on the wisdom of cutting the budget of these programs—what would be the impact on our national security of a reduction or loss of economic and democracy assistance in critical countries in the Middle East?

Answer:

Deep cuts to the budgets for the State Department and USAID, which include our economic development and democracy assistance programs in critical countries in the Middle East, will be devastating to our national security, will render us unable to respond to unanticipated opportunities or emerging needs, and will damage our leadership around the world.

The Middle East presents the United States with some of its most pressing security and political challenges. The dramatic changes witnessed in the region over the past few weeks present an unparalleled opportunity to enhance national security through the promotion of political reform and civil society development. U.S. assistance efforts are vitally important to realizing the promise of a future defined by peace, democracy, stability, and prosperity for the region.

Egypt is a pivotal country in the Middle East and a long-time partner of the United States. Its well-being is important for the region as a whole. We have worked closely with Egypt over the decades to support and advance U.S. interests in the region, including peace with Israel, confronting Iranian ambitions, and reintegrating Iraq into the Arab fold.

Going forward, it is imperative that we use our foreign assistance to fund Egyptian requests for assistance to support a peaceful, orderly, and meaningful political and economic transformation in the country. These funds will help to build democratic institutions after the recent unrest and to create a durable political transition that is deliberate, inclusive and transparent, while responding to near-term socio-economic needs.

It is critical that the parameters of this assistance remain flexible so that State, through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and

USAID can respond quickly and with agility to requests for assistance across the region, within a rapidly changing environment. MEPI programming in several countries, including Egypt, Tunisia and Yemen, will respond to increased political space and opportunities for reform as events in the region continue to unfold.

Sweeping cuts to assistance in the Middle East would risk our national security, significantly impairing our border security programs and constraining our ability to counter extremists. Our steadfast support for real political reform in the region significantly diminishes the appeal of violent extremists and helps fight terrorism.

Questions for the Record Submitted to
Deputy Secretary James Steinberg
Representative Russ Carnahan (3)
House Committee on Foreign Affairs
February 10, 2011

Question:

Deputy Secretary Steinberg, the assassination of Rafiq Hariri marked a turning point in Lebanon's self-determination, as the popular uprisings which ensued resulted in the withdrawal of Syrian troops from the country. A government dominated by Hezbollah, an ally of Syria, would certainly be a step backward for Lebanese independence. Moreover, if the new Lebanese government does succumb to Hezbollah's demands, it would suspend support for the UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon and have terribly significant detriments for our interests in the region. As Mr. Makati attempts to form a new government, what do you feel the prospects are for the level of Hezbollah's influence? What might the U.S. do to reduce such influence, and what are the conditions for our continued military aid to Lebanon? What is the Administration's strategy to encourage Mr. Makati to honor Lebanon's international obligations, such as compliance with the UNSC resolution barring the flow of arms to Hezbollah through Syria, as well as its commitment to the Special Tribunal for Lebanon?

Answer:

We have informed PM-designate Mikati that the next government of Lebanon should abide by Lebanon's international obligations, including the full implementation of all Lebanon-related Security Council resolutions, including 1559, 1680, and 1701, as well as Lebanon's commitments to the

Special Tribunal for Lebanon. We support an interim government, but our policy remains not to engage with Hizballah, a designated foreign terrorist organization, nor with any of its cabinet ministers, and that policy will not change.

When Prime Minister-designate Mikati forms his new government, we will review its composition, policies, and decisions to determine the extent of Hizballah's political influence over it, its adherence to Lebanon's international obligations, including the UNSC resolutions and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon, and its alignment with U.S. goals and policies, and then determine the nature of our bilateral relationship. Since this government has not yet been formed, it is premature to make any determinations about the future of U.S. assistance to Lebanon, including our assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). Currently, we are reviewing all planned shipments of U.S.-funded equipment and will continue to implement existing safeguards designed to ensure that Hizballah or other terrorist organizations do not benefit from U.S. assistance activities.

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