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AMERICA'S AID AND EGYPT'S INDIFFERENCE
Dina Khayat

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, no country stood by the U.S. more staunchly in its fight against al-Qaeda than Egypt. Having been through its own war against terror in the 1990s, Egypt was able to provide valuable information and logistical support. Now the war is back on Egyptian territory, in the Sinai and other Egyptian provinces. A direct link between the Muslim Brotherhood and its jihadist allies was established by the Brotherhood itself in July, shortly after President Morsi’s ouster, when Mohamed Beltagui, a senior Muslim Brother, said on television that the violence in the Sinai and elsewhere would cease the moment Mr. Morsi was reinstated as president.

Yet rather than condemn the terrorist attacks that have since increased and spread across the country, the Obama Administration decided last week to send a different message. The State Department released a statement on Oct. 9 saying that it would be "recalibrating" its assistance provided to Egypt. It also said it would continue working with the interim Egyptian government to help it move toward democracy and
inclusiveness. The statement came just two days after three deadly terrorist attacks in Cairo and Sinai: a drive-by shooting near the Suez Canal that killed six soldiers, a car bomb that killed three police officers and wounded dozens near a Red Sea resort area, and a rocket-propelled grenade attack that damaged a government satellite transmitter in southern Cairo.

Which forms of aid would be cut, and whether these were permanent cuts or just suspensions, were left unspecified in the State Department's statement. As was the total reduction in the amount of aid, which at $1.3 billion yearly pales, in any event, next to the $12 billion quietly advanced by Egypt's Arab neighbors in the past three months.

This was a baffling message to Egypt's interim government and the vast majority of Egyptians, millions of whom who came out to protest Mr. Morsi's rule on June 30. What they heard was that the Obama Administration stands firmly behind the Muslim Brotherhood, even if it means damaging the two countries' strategic relationship.

To call the curtailing of U.S. aid a prod to the Egyptian government toward democracy is disingenuous. There was neither outrage nor threats from Washington last November, when Mr. Morsi issued a constitutional declaration that effectively put him and his diktats above the law. Or during the ensuing demonstrations in December, when dozens died just behind Mr. Morsi's palace walls at the hands of Muslim Brotherhood supporters.

When Gen. Sisi appeared on television on July 3, the day Mr. Morsi was ousted, he was flanked by the Sheikh al Azhar, the Coptic Pope, women, youth, politicians left and right, and representatives of Salafist groups. Only the Muslim Brotherhood, which had turned down an invitation, was missing. That picture contrasts starkly with the one presented by Mr. Morsi, who, during his brief tenure, surrounded himself solely with members of his organization and appointed them to executive positions. Copts, secularists and even Salafists were conspicuously absent. Calls by the Obama administration for inclusiveness should have begun then; today they ring hollow.

When millions of Egyptians took to the streets on June 30, they took the only path possible to changing their government. There was no prospect of impeaching Mr. Morsi. The army intervened solely to prevent the chaos that would surely have occurred had Egyptians been left to fight one another. Now, three months into the new interim government and with a constitution being written by 50 representatives of society—again, all but the Muslim Brotherhood—there is no turning back. The draft constitution is almost complete, and dates and plans for parliamentary and presidential elections are set.

The challenge remains the economy, but it is hard to rebuild when so many resources are diverted to fighting weekly violence, as Muslim Brotherhood demonstrators, often armed, take to the streets. The Brotherhood has chosen to exclude itself from the governing process, preferring instead to bully their way into negotiating the best possible deal for themselves, which includes the reinstatement of Mr. Morsi as president. Brotherhood supporters who are not implicated in the present violence will eventually be included in a new government—but only when the organization changes its mind and decides to operate within the context of a state.

Egyptians are yearning to get it right this time. They are determined to build a democratic state and avoid the mistakes of the past. What will eventually emerge is a country much more sensitive to human and religious rights. It will not be a repetition of the Mubarak years. We would have liked America with us at this time, and its support would have sent a strong message to the Egyptian people.

Instead, upon hearing the news of the U.S. aid cuts, there was a collective shrug in Egypt, and a general sense of relief at being rid of any shackles that had tied the government's hands in fighting terrorism. Such is the popular anger against the Brotherhood and their daily annoyances that there are even calls for martial law to be applied—or at least for demonstrations by any faction to be outlawed by force for a period.
The Egypt-U.S. relationship is decades-old, built on mutual strategic interests. It has withstood many challenges.

Even in the midst of the June 30 demonstrations, and at the height of anger against U.S. policies, banners in the streets proclaimed Egyptians' love for Americans. To throw all that to the wind for unfathomable benefits and spurious justifications in the name of democracy and inclusiveness is a pity.

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**THERE ARE TWO EGYPTS AND THEY HATE EACH OTHER**

*Ashraf Khalil*

*Time World*, Oct. 08, 2013

Egypt’s latest spasm of violence over the weekend—which led to at least 57 deaths and 400 injured—confirmed the troubled nation’s new reality: The emergence of two distinct, opposed Egyptians that hate each other. One Egypt is in the ascendant—that of a nationalist, pro-military populace that has nothing but contempt for the country’s Islamists, represented chiefly by the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egypt of the Brotherhood is reeling and embittered: it has seen its democratically-elected President ousted by the military this July and its supporters gunned down in the streets. But it’s showing no sign of backing down.

The enmity existed well before senior Muslim Brotherhood official Mohamed Morsi won the presidency in June 2012. But the chasm between these two sides widened dramatically over the course of Morsi’s chaotic and divisive year in power, which culminated in Morsi’s July 3 ousting, cheered on by millions of citizens.

Both sides covet the deeply symbolic real estate that is Tahrir Square—epicenter of the original February 2011 revolution that ousted long-ruling President Hosni Mubarak and the launchpad for Egypt’s faltering revolutionary moment. Tahrir’s fortunes, and who controls it, have shifted multiple times since the initial uprising. But an unprecedented spectacle of division took place on Oct. 6: one side celebrated inside of Tahrir Square, while the other side desperately fought—and died—to reach it and confront its rivals.

Inside of Tahrir Square, supporters of the military rallied in the thousands with flags, fireworks, patriotic songs and vuvuzelas. Oct. 6 is a national holiday—a militaristic one that celebrates the launching of a successful surprise attack on Israel in the 1973 war. So the current national mood, characterized by nationalist and anti-Islamist fervor, dovetailed neatly with the holiday. Posters of Defense Minister Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi (notably not civilian Interim President Adly Mansour) dominated the day—many of them directly comparing Al-Sisi with Col. Gamal Abdel Nasser, the beloved and iconic force behind the 1952 coup that ended the monarchy and ushered in almost 60 years of military rule.

Outside of Tahrir Square, the losers of the country’s political shakeup continued their Sisyphean campaign for their voices to be heard and heeded. “Our target is to go back to Tahrir to bring the revolution back to the square,” said Diaa El-Sawy, spokesman of the Youth Against the Coup group, ahead of their protest. But the Brotherhood—which marched in the thousands from multiple directions on Sunday—never managed to get near Tahrir Square. The entire downtown area was heavily secured with riot police, Army APCs, barbed wire and ID checkpoints at the entrances to Tahrir. The subway station underneath Tahrir had already been closed for months to prevent unauthorized infiltration.

Three separate Brotherhood marches were violently repelled. In Ramses Square, about a 20 minute walk from Tahrir, the two sides battled into the night with the Brotherhood marchers confronting a combined force of army soldiers, riot police and local youth gangs hurling rocks, Molotovs and fireworks and apparently working in coordination with the security forces. The final death toll from the day reached 57—the vast majority of the dead from the Brotherhood side.
In the aftermath, there is no sign of either side backing away from the chasm that threatens to swallow post-revolutionary Egypt. The Brotherhood—which has managed to retain a high level of coordination and planning despite most of its senior decision-makers being arrested—has announced plans to launch a fresh push to occupy Tahrir Square this coming Friday, Oct. 11. The Square, according to a statement released late Sunday night, “belongs to all Egyptians and no one will prevent us from demonstrating in it, no matter the sacrifices.”

Many trying to resist the current polarization or find some sort of middle ground are punished by both sides. One of the clearest examples of this dynamic came in mid-September when senior Brotherhood official Salah Soltan published a unilateral apology to the nation on behalf of the Brotherhood. Soltan’s US-citizen son Mohamed was shot in the Aug. 14 siege on a Brotherhood sit-in site and later arrested after two weeks on the run. Nevertheless, Salah Soltan wrote a month later that the Brotherhood should “apologize to the nation for our political mistakes…we are not against Egypt. We are part of Egypt.”

Among the mistakes he mentioned was a failure to better include the non-Islamist and revolutionary youth into their decision-making processes—spawning divisions and a national paranoia over the Islamist agenda that eventually turned much of the country against the Brotherhood.

But rather than becoming some sort of rallying point for the start of a push for reconciliation, Salah Soltan immediately became a man without a country. The Brotherhood distanced itself from his comments, saying Soltan did not speak for the organization. And, within days Soltan was arrested at Cairo airport by the very government with whom he was trying to reconcile.

Khalil is a Cairo-based journalist and author of Liberation Square: Inside the Egyptian Revolution and the Rebirth of a Nation.

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THE ETHNIC CLEANSING OF CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT
Michael Armanious
Gatestone Institute, Oct. 1, 2013

Iskander Toss, who had lived all his life in the town of Delga in Upper Egypt, last week was kidnapped, severely beaten, and dragged on the dirt roads of the village until his spirit left him. His crime? As in the Kenya mall massacre last week, he was a Christian. A few days later, the Ikhwan [Muslim Brotherhood] jihadists opened his grave, pulled his body out, and dragged it through the village until the majority of the Coptic families fled in terror.

What is unique about Toss's death is that people know his name. Throughout the land of the Nile, murders like his are taking place on a regular basis. Delga, located 150 miles south of Cairo, is one of the oldest and the largest towns in Egypt. Out of over 100,000 inhabitants, 25,000 are Christians. Delga had a number of churches [4-5], some going back to the 4th century. Almost all of them have been destroyed.

For the past 75 days, since Morsi was forced out of office, members of the Ikhwan and its affiliates have cordoned off the village. They forced some Christians to pay "Jizya," the extra poll tax that Christians and other non-Muslims are required to pay (like a shakedown fee for "protection."). Members of the Ikhwan make life intolerable for Christian community in the village.

On September 16, 2013, the Egyptian armed forces moved in to free Delga from the Ikhwan and its supporters. The armed forces waited that long because of what happened earlier in Kerdasa, another village south of Cairo and the home of many Christian families.

In Kerdasa, members of the Ikhwan, starting in a police station, took 11 policemen and soldiers hostage. They tortured and shot them dead on camera, and set the station and the village's churches on fire. Christians fled the village of Kerdasa. The government's strategy was to wait to give the world chance to see what the Ikhwan is capable of.
Ehab Ramzy, a Coptic attorney in Egypt, provided the context. He stated in a televised interview that his office building was set on fire along with 50 churches and 1,000 Christian businesses. They were destroyed in Upper Egypt, Ramzy explained, on the day that Morsi was forced out. This was the Ikhwan strategy, he said: to punish the church for not supporting Morsi.

Since the ouster of Mohamed Morsi, the problem has only intensified: anti-Christian violence now manifests itself in Egypt with increasing regularity. Since ouster of Hosni Mubarak in February 2011, what happened to the Christians in Delga and Kerdasa, has been happening throughout Egypt. The Christians of the village of Marinab in the Aswan Governorate, 700 miles south of Cairo, were also placed under siege by jihadists in October 2011. Their food supplies and contacts with the outside world were cut off until they agreed to have their church demolished because they violated the building code by displaying a cross, which the jihadists said was offensive.

The death of Iskander Toss and the ongoing attacks against Christians in Egypt demonstrates a troubling reality in the Middle East: On September 19, Mohamed Hassanein Heikal, adviser to many leaders in the Middle East, stated in televised interview that most countries in the region owned chemical weapons, the poor nation's weapon of choice.

Heikal also stated that in the short run, President Obama's incoherent foreign policies in the Middle East will threaten the stability of countries such as Lebanon, especially its Christian minority; and in the long run, the Persian Gulf countries. He added that what happened in Delga is not just an indicator of what the Ikhwan is capable of, but of what is coming.

The issue came to a head with the current U.S. administration's response to the sarin gas attack that killed several hundred people on the outskirts of Damascus on Aug. 21, 2013. By not attacking Assad, a puppet of Shiite Iran, the U.S. has not only strengthened America's adversaries, Russia and China, but also emboldened the mullahs in Iran and Sunni extremists in Syria and Egypt, who now apparently think that the radicals' war of attrition with the U.S. -- which has been going on for decades -- is finally bearing fruit.

While the British and American people have made it clear that they do not support a strike on the Assad regime in Syria, Christians in Syria and in the rest of the Middle East have also been unanimous in their opposition to such a strike: they fear it would unleash the forces of jihadists and cause the total destruction of Christianity in the region.

There is an irony here: by failing to act against the Bashar Al-Assad after stating it would, the U.S. policy has not only put religious and ethnic minorities in the region at even greater risk; it has also put moderate, reform-minded Muslims in even greater danger. By speaking about the use of chemical weapons as a red line, and Assad's days being numbered, the U.S. gave leaders in the Middle East an expectation that it would act in the face of atrocity.

By not acting, the U.S. has unintentionally given the signal that America is retreating from the region. The implication of this retreat is that violence against Christians and other non-Muslims can proceed with impunity. U.S. President Barack Obama's recent speech, given on the eve of the twelfth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, did nothing to disabuse global jihadists of this notion. As American credibility in the region has deteriorated, Islamist violence against Christians in the Middle East has escalated.

The problem is particularly evident in Syria, where Christians have been driven from their homes in Maaloula by Sunni jihadists associated with Al Qaeda. Earlier this year, the Christian quarter of Homs was completely destroyed and emptied of all of its inhabitants -- more than 100,000 people were evicted from their homes. Churches dating back to the second, third and fourth centuries were destroyed.

If the violence against Christians in the Middle East continues without a meaningful response from the U.S. administration and leaders in the Middle East, it will indicate to jihadist cells currently residing in Europe and North America that their hour has finally arrived.
Although the Ikhwan has now been outlawed and driven from the halls of power in Egypt, as an international organization, it is still a force to be reckoned with: even if it is blocked in Egypt, its stated plan is to create problems for Western democracies.

If the American people and the current Administration turn their backs on the Middle East region, the destruction of both Christianity and freedom there is a virtual certainty.

*Michael Armanious is US based analyst and a video producer. He was born in Egypt.*

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**ISLAMIST OR NATIONALIST: WHO IS EGYPT’S MYSTERIOUS NEW PHARAOH?**

*Raymond Stock*

*Foreign Policy Review Institute, October 2013*

Egypt's new de facto pharaoh, General Abdel-Fattah al-Sisi, is a man of mystery. Is he an Islamist, or a nationalist? Is he a person of high principle, or a lowly opportunist? And in a land which has known five thousand years of mainly centralized, one-man rule, with limited experience of democracy, when have we seen his type before, and where will he lead the troubled, ancient nation now?

These questions are crucial to knowing how the U.S. should react to al-Sisi's removal of Egypt's first “freely elected” president, Mohamed Morsi on July 3 in answer to overwhelmingly massive street protests demanding that he do so, and to the ongoing bloody crackdown on Morsi's group, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), that began on August 14. Citing the ongoing, actually two-way violence in Egypt, President Barack Obama's administration has now suspended much of our annual $1.6 billion aid to the country, save for money needed to maintain security operations along the Israeli border in Sinai and to directly support the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty. [For the remainder of this article please click: Foreign Policy Review Institute – Ed.]

*Raymond Stock resided in Egypt for 20 years. He is writing a biography of Egyptian Nobel laureate in literature, Naguib Mahfouz (seven of whose books he has translated), for Farrar, Straus & Giroux in New York.*

**On Topic**

*The Real Force Behind Egypt's 'Revolution Of The State':* Reuters, Oct. 10, 2013 — In Hosni Mubarak's final days in office in 2011, the world's gaze focused on Cairo, where hundreds of thousands of protesters demanded the resignation of one of the Arab world's longest serving autocrats.

*Interview with Defence Minister Abdel-Fattah Al-Sisi (part 1):* Al-Masry Al-Youm, Oct. 9, 2013

*Interview with Defense Minister Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi (part 2):* Al-Masry Al-Youm, Oct. 10, 2013 — During a four-hour interview, Sisi did not refrain from answering any question but chose to hold back some details because, according to him, it was not yet the time to elaborate on them. While Sisi believes that the decision to oust former President Mohamed Morsy prevented a civil war in Egypt, he speaks of Morsy respectfully. He says that the Muslim Brotherhood were not equipped enough to lead a country as big as Egypt.

*Egypt's Economic Competitiveness Plunges To New Lows:* Hend El-Behary, *Egypt Independent*, Oct. 12, 2013 — Political instability has caused Egypt’s economic competitiveness to tumble from 107th to 118th out of 148 countries, according to Global Competitiveness Index (GCI), an annual report issued by the World Economic Forum.

*Sinai: Can the Truth Be Told?:* Drew Brammer, *Egypt Independent*, Oct. 11, 2013 — A young, niqab-clad journalist carefully tiptoed through the black, burned out shell of a house, her feet cracking broken tiles and stone as she stepped. Sunlight glared into the charred room through massive openings blown out of the bullet-ridden walls. This destruction is a result of one of many recent military offenses in Sinai.