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United States and European Union Policies towards the 2011 Egyptian Uprising and the 2013 Post Revolution Regime

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Abstract

The aim of the study is to analyze the foreign policy of the United States (US) and the European Union (EU) toward the uprising of 2011 and the post June 30, 2013, Revolution regime of Egypt by adopting neoclassical realism. The study concludes that the US has enduring interests in Egypt, economic as well as political, securing the Suez Canal safe passage preserves US economy and to ensure sustaining its peace Treaty with Israel of 1979. For the EU, it is interested to prevent illegal migration, and Egypt is a big market for European arms and products. Furthermore, both western partners are concerned with the security situation in the Sinai Peninsula since the onset of the uprising in Egypt due to its crucial importance for the security of Israel – their favorite ally in the region.

Keywords: Uprising of 2011, June 30 Revolution, Regime of Egypt, United States, European Union, Foreign Policy, National Security.

المخلص

الهدف من الدراسة هو تحليل السياسة الخارجية للولايات المتحدة والاتحاد الأوروبي تجاه انتفاضة 2011 وثورة 30 يونيو 2013 في مصر من خلال تبني الواقعية الكلاسيكية الجديدة. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن الولايات المتحدة لديها مصالح دائمة في مصر، اقتصادية وكذلك سياسية، فإن تأمين الممر الآمن لقناة السويس يحافظ على الاقتصاد الأمريكي ويضمن استدامة معاهدة السلام مع إسرائيل لعام 1979. بالنسبة للاتحاد الأوروبي، فإنه مهتم بمنع الهجرة غير الشرعية، كما أن مصر سوق كبير للأسلحة والمنتجات الأوروبية. علاوة على ذلك، يشعر كلا الشريكين الغربيين بالقلق إزاء الوضع الأمني في شبه جزيرة سيناء منذ بداية الانتفاضة في مصر نظرًا لأهميتها الحاسمة لأمن إسرائيل - حليفهم المفضل في المنطقة.

الكلمات الرئيسية: انتفاضة 2011، ثورة 30 يونيو، النظام المصري، الولايات المتحدة، الاتحاد الأوروبي، السياسة الخارجية، الأمن القومي.

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2011 uprising, Egypt has faced many constraints due to the instability of the country caused by frequent protests due to economic stagnation and police repression, protestors were demanding better political, economic, and social conditions. Economic issues and deliberate police inaction along-side with failure of the ministry of the interior as a whole to contain the protestors, led to an increase in crime rates in the country (Ketchley, 2021). These events led to lack of security in the country; and resulted in negative domestic, regional, and global repercussions.

Domestic repercussions of the uprising of 2011 were mainly affecting the Egyptian economy. For example, the tourism industry, which was heavily hit, is considered a major source of employment, and revenues of foreign currencies for Egypt. Looking at the statistics, hotel occupancy rates fell down by almost fifty per cent from 2011 to 2013 compared to what they were in the final years of the Mubarak regime. The structural challenges and the prolonged political transition led to macroeconomic imbalances in the country. The overvalue of the exchange rate along with undermined competitiveness and low reserves, and a significantly weak revenues from tourism due to security concerns as mentioned above resulted in large deficits and high level of public debt (International Monetary Fund Report No. 17/17). Beside the tourism sector, the private sector, the stock market, and almost every other sector in the country was affected by the uprising in Egypt. Government spending was at 35 percent of GDP while the annual deficit had stayed at 12.7 percent (International Monetary Fund Country Report No. 21/163).

In regard to regional repercussions, the uprising in Egypt had an impact on the Arab region and the Mediterranean neighborhood as a whole. Surrounding countries in the region tried to emulate the success of the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt to topple their regimes. The region has witnessed, “revolts in Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and latterly Syria, there were significant protests in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Occupied Territories” (Teti and Gervasio, 2011).

In regard to global repercussions, due to Egypt’s proximity to the EU, political instability in Egypt led to a threat of higher levels of illegal migration to Europe that’s why EU member states were concerned with

the uprising in Egypt. Furthermore, threats from radical movements in the Sinai Peninsula have increased the likelihood of security concerns to Israel which is important for US and EU as they consider Sinai's security as crucial for the stability of Israel. In addition, the US was concerned with the situation in Egypt in general to preserve its national interests.

Study Problem

The study elaborates how the EU and the US dealt with the new regime of Egypt after the 2011 uprising. The US and EU relationships were strained with Egypt, and the latter grappled with widespread turbulence almost all over the country (Harold, 2012), especially in the aftermath of the 2013 regime-change. The US and EU were hesitant to restore immediate direct diplomatic relations after the 2013 upheaval, there were sensitive debates about the nature of the 2013 regime-change, and some Western scholars claimed there were traumatic and violent events that ensued the transition. But Egypt's foreign policy institution – Ministry of Foreign Affairs made it a priority to explain the nature of the events that took place in Egypt especially post June 30, 2013, Revolution. Furthermore, the study focuses on post June 30, 2013, Revolution regime, due to the critical security situation that Egypt has faced as mentioned in detail above, especially in the Sinai Peninsula as this area is critical for the security of Israel, and the security of Israel is of crucial importance to the EU and the US as it preserves their national security interests in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

The key questions that the study has tried to answer were: are there any clear US and EU foreign policy actions toward the security situation in Egypt? to what extent did the US and EU play a role to support the regime of Egypt? what tools, policies, and programs did the US and the EU use? were the programs effective? in terms of financial, political, socio-economic and military support, to what extent did the EU and the US support the regime? The main hypothesis of the study states that even though there was hesitancy to support the regime of Egypt via the internal debate within US institutions - White House, the State Department, and the US Congress, at the end the US supported the regime of Egypt by resuming the annual \$1.3 of military aid even if it was suspended temporarily, due to Egypt's crucial security importance for Israel and hence for the two Western partners' national security in the region. In addition, the EU favored stability and security over human rights improvements and transition to democracy in supporting the

regime of Egypt to preserve its own national security interests in Egypt and the whole region.

Methodology

The study focuses on applying a comparative perspective on US and EU foreign policy towards Egypt during the uprising of 2011 and post June 30, revolution regime. The paper depended upon primary data from official government websites and official political statements, together with secondary literature from scholars, local, regional, and international institutions, and finally from news articles. A document analysis and a comparative method between the EU and the US are used in the paper to study the differences and similarities of the foreign policies of each of the EU and the US toward the uprising of 2011 and the post June 30 Revolution regime of Egypt. To analyze the arguments regarding the EU and the US actions toward Egypt, the study utilizes the document analysis and the comparative approach. Document analysis is one of the major tools used in political science research and is considered an effective qualitative research method to interpret the documents from the EU and its member countries throughout the duration of the critical security situation in Egypt. Besides, the study uses comparative research, as it involves comparing two stages at a time, or just comparing the same issue over time, to check if a policy's effects differ over a stretch of time.

Theoretical framework

The article is meant to explain EU and US foreign policy towards Egypt after the uprising of 2011 and the 2013 regime-change by adopting a neoclassical realism' approach in International Relations and by raising a main argument: the fact that Egypt is a major and indispensable ally security-wise for both States in the MENA region.

“Realism is widely regarded as the most influential theoretical tradition in International relations” (Burchill 2001, p. 70). It is based upon the view that states are made up of individuals who are self-interested and power-seeking. Accordingly, each state acts in a unitary way, pursuing its own national interest (Mingst 2004, p. 65). “There is no centralized authority that stands above states,” (Dunne, 2010, p. 79) therefore the international system is characterized by anarchy and insecurity.

Most importantly as per realism, states consider their national interests to achieve security (Hinnebusch and Ehteshami, 2014). Realist claim that

insecurity generates struggles for power and that foreign policy seeks to counter security threats—threats first of all to regime survival but also to state interests (Ibid). Some states also have ambitions for regional leadership, international acceptance, and economic development, but these can only be pursued when security is established. The study uses neoclassical realism theory; it is important to study the US and the EU reactions toward the uprisings in Egypt from the realist school of thought where national interest is the main factor in shaping their policy choices.

Neoclassical realism argues that the scope and ambition of a country's foreign policy is driven first and foremost by the country's relative material power. Yet it contends that the impact of power capabilities on foreign policy is indirect and complex, because systemic pressures must be translated through intervening unit-level variables such as decision-makers' perceptions and state structure.

Understanding the links between power and policy thus requires close examination of both the international and the domestic contexts within which foreign policy is formulated and implemented (Rose, 2011).

National self-interest of both Western countries was a key motivator in their foreign policy choices toward sustaining military aid to Egypt. Both Western partners focused more on supporting the regimes' stability and security over human rights improvements to protect their national interest. We can point to excessive neorealism in explaining EU foreign policy to Egypt, which proved to be likely to bypass any human right issue to conduct business as usual and contain migration flows.

And that's why in the case under study, the US and EU were interested to support Egypt to maintain security and stability for the benefit of Israel that ultimately preserves their own national interests in the MENA region.

The concept of 'regime' in foreign policy analysis

Since the concept of 'regime' in foreign policy analysis is distinct from 'state' or 'government,' the study considers the government of President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi as a regime as it aligns with below definition:

A regime may be thought of as the formal and informal organization of the centre of political power, and of its relations with the broader society. A regime determines who has access to political power, and how those who are in power deal with those who are not. (Lawson, 1991, 3)

Regimes are more permanent forms of political organization than specific government (Ibid). Hence, Adly's government as well as the one-year presidency of Mohamed Morsi did not survive enough to be eligible to be defined as regimes.

The concepts of Foreign Policy and National Security

It is also important to focus our study on two major concepts: Foreign Policy and National Security. Although many scholars are focusing their attention upon new emerging theories and are dealing with new concepts, the study considers national security and the traditional concepts of foreign policy as the main factor that shaped the policies and approaches of the US and the EU toward the post uprising regime of Egypt. It is believed that to explain the policies and responses of both the US and the EU, the study assumes that the national interest is the main factor in shaping any foreign policy.

The EU favored stability and security in Egypt over the transition to democracy and human rights improvements. On the other hand, the same was the case for the US. The conflict of interests within the White House, the Congress, and State Department to suspend the \$1.3 billion of annual military aid to Egypt was not implemented for a long period on the basis of security and stability arguments ignoring human rights violations. Both Western partners supported the regime of Egypt based on the traditional concepts of foreign policy and national interest. Both Western partners were concerned with the security of Israel – that was affected by the Sinai insurgencies in Egypt and that's why both Western partners supported Egypt since via the security of Egypt in its Sinai Province they are preserving and maintaining security in Israel which is crucial for their national interest as stated in their national security strategy.

The argument to using neoclassical realism in the case of US-Egypt or EU-Egypt relations, considers the US or the EU as actors in the international system that try to preserve their national security interests. Both Western partners have interests to support the regime of Egypt. Whether this interest is for their direct benefit or indirect benefit as the case of protecting the security of Israel via protecting the security of Sinai that ultimately preserves their national interests in the region. The US and EU consider Israel as their favorite ally in the MENA region. Since Israel shares borders with Egypt, the insurgency in Sinai affects the security and stability of Israel. Therefore, the US and EU had a common interest to provide Egypt with

military aid to fight terrorism in Sinai that ultimately protects the security of Israel since the latter preserves the two Western partners' national security interests in the MENA region. In addition, the US has direct interest to protect the trade routs in the Suez Canal that protects its economy. Even though, the Biden Administration as well as US Congress were hesitant to provide Egypt with military aid either due to the traumatic events that took place in Rabaa Square or by claiming Egypt's role in the region has been minimal and declining, the US due to the above-mentioned points and arguments made by other US policy actors such as the State Department resumed delivering the \$1.3 billion military aid to Egypt. It was clear that the US and EU were using the traditional concepts of foreign policy in international relations and protecting their own national self-interests.

Literature review

The purpose of this section is to offer a brief overview of previous research within this field to answer above questions. From the preliminary reading of the researcher, relevant studies can be classified under two main categories: the first one is literature on EU responses and actions toward the regime of Egypt, and the second addresses literature on US responses and actions toward the regime of Egypt.

Literature on EU responses and actions toward Egypt

Tobias Schumacher argues that the EU has lacked an immediate response toward the security instability in Egypt. He tackles how the EU floats between activism and passivism, depending on the nature of each country's revolution and prospects for success (Schumacher, 2015, pp. 381-401). Issues in EU and US Foreign Policy, edited by MYnevver Cebeci, aim to analyze the perceptions, interests, and policies of the EU and the US on various international issues. It portrays their convergences and divergences in foreign policy. Cebeci provides a theoretical framework for understanding EU and US foreign policy (Cebeci, 2011).

Besides, BBC Bureau Chief Paul Danahar, lays the forces shaping the new Middle East, and tracks the causes of change together with the possibilities for the future (Danahar, 2013). Roger Owen also explores the challenges that the Arab revolutions face across the Middle East and North Africa (Owen, 2014). Moreover, Walter Laquer provides insight into Europe's current political and financial crisis, such factors a lack of a unified foreign policy (Laqueur, 2012). Some scholars argue that the precise reason

for the EU's support and lack of support for different regimes is much more complex.

Literature on US responses and actions toward Egypt

Gilbert Anchar analyzes the deep roots of the uprisings as relating to economic and social factors. Moreover, the sponsoring of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Emirate of Qatar utilizing Al Jazeera satellite channel against the regime of Egypt is addressed (Anchar, 2013). Kenneth Pollack claims that the greatest danger to America's peace and prosperity is political unrest and empowering terrorists, these are considered direct threats to the US' national security. He asserts that the US should prioritize the Middle East in its foreign policy, but in a more comprehensive way (Pollack, 2009).

Laurel E. Miller et al, study democratization in the Arab world, they focus on political reform in the Arab world, with a specific focus on North Africa. They study civil-military relations in Egypt, generational divisions within the Muslim Brotherhood, changes in the regional security environment, and prospects for democratization in the Arab countries (Miller, 2012). Some authors analyze the role of the armies in the Arab Spring, and how the armed forces responded differently in the Arab countries. For example, Egypt was a good example where the army facilitated the overthrowing of an unpopular government based on requests and support from the Egyptian people.

How can we define the Security Situation in Egypt Post the Uprising of 2011 and how political instability led to lack of security?

Since January 2011, and after removing the old regime of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt has experienced "significant political turmoil and the political environment remained restrictive for many years. This has sometimes involved violent protests and disturbances, which have resulted in a number of deaths" (United Kingdom Government). Political instability led to lack of security and here we find why the two Western partners supported the regime of Egypt with delivering military aid to maintain order and political stability in the country so that Egypt enhances its security situation in the Sinai Peninsula and hence preserves the security of Israel.

During the transitional years of 2011 and 2012, Field Marshal Mohamed Tantawi became Egypt's acting head of state after he enjoyed a relatively good term with the Egyptian people, this has turned into anger due

to the slow pace of democratic transition in the country (BBC, August 2012). Then, Mohamed Morsi, the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, became president on June 30, 2012, until July 3, 2013. During his term, protesters' anger shifted from the ruling military council to the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood as the latter pursued "supra-constitutional amendments to stifle opposition" (Halawa, 2019).

In addition, targeted clashes erupted between two civilian protester blocs: those proponents who were mobilized by the Muslim Brotherhood in Rabaa Square, mainly Islamist activists or pro-Islamist, versus the civilian protestors who were opponents of the Muslim Brotherhood, mainly secular activists or anti-Islamist. Therefore, Egyptians, "witnessed mass civilian-on-civilian violence for the first time in living memory" (Ibid). Furthermore, during Morsi's year in power, the country witnessed the highest level of insecurity in the country as police force disappeared from the streets especially in rural areas. Moreover, the Brotherhood was perceived as a threat to the Coptic Christian minority and secular nature of the country since the Brotherhood endorsed many of the religious Salafist Party's extremist views. Lastly, the anti-Islamist side of protestors were against the Brotherhood's "Grand Renaissance Project" to establish an Islamic state (Ibid).

The protestors via a small petition movement called Tamarod (Rebel) called for elections. On July 3, 2013, the Egyptian military has positively responded to the calls of the Egyptian people who were against the regime of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood due to the above-mentioned reasons thus removing Morsi and forming an interim government. The military, or the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) was ruling the country in a state of exception, to maintain order and reinforce a sort of political stability by choosing the President of the Supreme Constitutional Court, Mr. Adly Mansour, to be interim President on July 3, 2013. He ran the country during the transitional phase until the 8th of June 2014. Mr. Adly Mansour was succeeded by Elected President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi from June 2014 until now (The Arab Republic of Egypt Presidency).

As a reaction from the Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi's supporters, violence erupted in the country especially in the Rabaa Square and in the Sinai Peninsula where the majority of the terrorist affiliates mobilize in the latter as some commentators argue, militants perceive the military as their enemy since its apparatus toppled down the leader of the Muslim Brotherhood. In

November 2014, Wilayat Sinai/Sinai Province (WS) declared its allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) or the Islamic State (IS). The terrorist group has declared responsibility for numerous attacks against Muslim and Christian civilians as well as on the military and government sites especially near Egypt's border with Gaza and Israel, these events resulted in "promoting security cooperation between Egypt and Israel" (Council on Foreign Relations, updated 2022). In 2015, a charter flight operated by Russian airline Metrojet broke up midair 23 minutes after takeoff from Egypt's Sharm El-Sheikh Airport as it headed to St. Petersburg, killing all 224 passengers and crew on board according to an Egyptian Journal, "Egyptian Streets." Militants from an affiliate, known as Sinai Province, said they brought down the plane shortly after it crashed (BBC News, November 2015).

As a result, according to the government's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), the number of tourists visiting the country decreased by 40 percent in 2016. Tourist revenues during July through September alone fell by 56.1 percent in comparison with the same period in 2015, which had already witnessed a drop than prior years (Harb, 2017). In addition, since Egypt shares border with Libya to the Western part of the country, al-Qaeda affiliate, Ansar al-Islam has been attacking Egyptian Security Forces since 2017 in its western part of Egypt with Egypt's border with Libya (Cummings, 2017). Since the EU and the US consider fighting terrorism as a top priority agenda in their national security strategies, Egypt had this unique opportunity to share with the EU and the US the same goal to fight terrorism especially in the Sinai Peninsula.

National Security Interests of the US and EU toward Egypt

US and EU foreign policy toward Egypt has experienced changes over time, due to the twists and turns they experienced throughout almost a decade as mentioned in detail earlier. The paper has depended upon neoclassical realism as it explains how national security of the EU and of the US has altered their foreign policies toward the security situation in Egypt and how they favored maintaining their military and financial aid to Egypt without substantial human rights improvements.

For the EU, Egypt has a longstanding role in mediating peace efforts in the region. "Egypt is a critical partner to Europe in finding solutions to transnational challenges in the Euro-Mediterranean region" (Abdel Ghafar,

2018). Europe, for its part, has a deep interest in enhancing security and stability in Egypt. The EU has an institutional weakness in formulating its foreign policy; member states do not have a common policy toward a country. In the case of Egypt, the bilateral cooperation is stronger and more successful over multilateral engagement within the EU as an institution.

US-Egyptian relation goes back to President Anwar El Sadat and lasted for thirty more years under President Hosni Mubarak. Prior to the Arab uprisings, the US preferred stability over reform in the Middle East. Moreover, some scholars argue that “US-Egyptian relationship has been a cornerstone of America’s Middle East policy for over three decades, and Egypt is, for US interests, the most important Arab country in the MENA region,” (Rugh, 2012) thus releasing the \$1.3 billion aid to Egypt. The Obama Administration reprogrammed \$165 million in already-appropriated economic assistance for support to Egypt’s economy (\$100 million) and political transition (\$65 million) (Sharp 2013, p. 17). The US believed that a military transition would facilitate the democratization process in Egypt while preserving American interests.

Furthermore, the US is interested in preserving regional stability, as stated in US’ defense strategy, one of the main pillars of US’ security strategy is to protect national security by preserving regional stability, supporting allies and partners, and cooperating with others to address common security challenges as stated in the Department of Defense, Quadrennial Defense Review Report of 2014. The US addresses global security issues by promoting international order as advanced by US leadership that, in turn, promotes peace, security, and opportunity through stronger cooperation to meet global challenges. During the uprising, one aspect of the American engagement with Egypt had remained constant: security cooperation, including the \$1.3 billion in annual assistance to the Egyptian military. Moreover, a world order, based on recognized principles of sovereignty, limited self-defense, and international law, has paved the way to a world filled with more uncertainty than certainty (Guiora 2013, p. 20).

It is not uncommon to hear officials from EU member states refer to Egypt as the ‘first line of defense’ for Europe against migration and terrorism. European policymakers increasingly emphasize the necessity of cooperation with Egypt. Due to the importance of its strategic value in a region that faces extreme hard conditions, the EU’s main interest in Egypt is to reinforce the

country's ability to counter terrorism and illegal migration, to prevent future political unrest by helping to solve the economic hardships, and to ensure commercial opportunities for European firms. Moreover, the EU also has a strong interest to promote stability, to achieve an inclusive growth, plus an effective and accountable governance in Egypt.

As discussed, the EU has a shared interest with Egypt due to their proximity and long ties. Egyptian socio-economic and political stability secures European interests and markets. During the uprising in Egypt and after the interim government was put in place, scholars have been divided whether the EU has played a key role in democracy promotion in Egypt (Mikail 2011, p. 5). Egypt is an important defense against the growing influence of extremism in the region, which is considered one of the main security threats to the EU. After several debates and hesitancy, the EU and even the US have shown signs that they have agreed with the regime change that followed June 30, 2013, because it would mean that the Egyptian regime would not turn a blind eye to the growing violence in the Sinai region.

To conclude, the US and Egypt share a strong partnership based on mutual interests in Middle East peace and stability, economic opportunity, and regional security US assistance to Egypt has played a central role in Egypt's economic and military development and in furthering the US and Egypt strategic partnership and regional stability. Since 1978, the US has provided Egypt with over \$50 billion in military and \$30 billion in economic assistance (U.S. State Department, 2022).

Research Analysis

As mentioned earlier, the Egyptian government is fighting WS in the Sinai Peninsula, since WS is considered a security threat to Egypt and Israel as well as the importance of maritime navigation of the Suez Canal, both the EU and the US are keen to preserve the safe passage of their products.

Foreign Policy of the US toward the Post Uprising Regime of Egypt

Secretary of State John Kerry appeared to support the revolution of June 30, saying that the Egyptian military was 'in effect ... restoring democracy' and averting civil war (Hamed, 2015). In addition, the White House was more concerned with the security situation in Egypt and favored to fund military cooperation with Egypt to fight terrorism. The US Department of State and the White House during Obama's Administration

were concerned that Egypt's Sinai Peninsula and Western Desert could become sanctuaries for the Islamic State and al-Qaeda as discussed earlier.

While members of US Congress and some Western scholars were proposing to suspend US, military aid delivered regularly on a yearly basis to Egypt since the 1970s. Some commentators recommend that the US should only maintain essential security and counterterrorism cooperation with the Egyptian government but focus more on supporting the Egyptian people (Dunne, 2014, pp. 1-7). The US wanted to suspend the share of military assistance given to Egypt each year due to the serious diplomatic strife of both the EU and the US with Egypt that occurred after the clashes between Muslim Brotherhood supporters of Egypt's ousted president Mohamed Morsi and police forces in Cairo on August 14, 2013 during the clearance operation of the Rabaa al-Adawiya camp. "The dispersal by security forces of two sit-ins in Cairo and other protests across Egypt left up to 1,000 people dead in a single day" (Amnesty International, 2015).

Some Western scholars even call that day as 'war on dissent' (Dentice and Melcangi, 2020). In addition, Western scholars argue that the implications of the widespread violations of Islamist activists' rights in Egypt led to the Sinai insurgency. This is partly true, "the attacks have increased in frequency since the ouster of Mohamed Morsi in 2013 and became more sophisticated and ambitious" (United Kingdom Government, 2017, p. 2).

However, according to the same report that was released by the United Kingdom Government, militants have targeted the police and security forces before the ouster of Morsi or the clearance operation of the Rabaa camp.

The mid-2000s saw a number of significant terrorist attacks on tourist targets in Sinai by Tawhid wal-Jihad, the group behind the attacks, and other militants/Islamists, but local anger persisted. The trigger for the current conflict in Sinai was the 2011 Arab Spring uprising, which toppled the government of Hosni Mubarak. Bedouin took the opportunity to mount attacks on the security forces. But the main actors in the insurgency quickly became jihadists. Diverse militant outfits 'coalesced' under the umbrella group Ansar Bayat al-Maqqdis (ABM) that changed their name in 2014 into Wilayat Sinai/Sinai Province (WS) (Ibid, 3).

Several months before the election of President El-Sisi, and for the first time in over thirty years, the US suspended military aid to Egypt. In October 2013, the US suspended “the delivery of certain large-scale military systems and cash assistance to the government pending credible progress toward an inclusive, democratically elected civilian government through free and fair elections” (Atlantic Council, 2015).

As a response to suspending the military aid by the Congress, Egypt’s foreign policy institution has made it a priority to explain the June 30 revolution and the transition to a democratically elected parliament and president, through diverse means including intense public diplomacy efforts to counter the negative campaign by supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood in the US. Speaking at the UN, former foreign minister, Nabil Fahmy sought to reassure participants that Egypt has a road map that includes a national agenda to implement a transitional democratic reform. He continued, “Egypt’s foreign policy is now a reflection of the will of our people and is formulated in line with our interests and national security, with no regard to any other consideration” (El-Adawy, 2013).

Egypt was confident that President Obama would not allow the flow of aid to stop. Yet to some analysts looking at the nature of the military aid, it was clear to maintain the military aid to Egypt since it is of substantial benefit to the US economy, it is a source of revenue from military equipment built in the US, such as M1 Abrams tanks manufactured in the US. Moreover, Russia would step in and provide Egypt with the necessary military assistance to fill the gap of the US’ military aid. In fact, some sign of this possibility is in Russia’s February 2014 arms sale to Egypt, \$2 billion in arms, including the sale of MIG fighters. It is not in the US national security interest to allow Russia to have influence in Egypt and the region. Moreover, for the US, the Egyptian military is fully engaged in fighting different terrorist groups in the Sinai Peninsula, and this is the most important security interest for the US in the MENA region. This area of concern is shared by both the US and Egypt since both countries consider terrorism a high security threat.

Looking at the Biden administration, even though President Biden pledged in his presidency campaign there would be ‘no more blank checks’ to Egypt, a \$197 million weapons sale in February 2021 was raising concerns among Democratic Members of Congress as it coincided with the release of the State Department annual human rights report that included human rights

concerns in Egypt. Members of Congress argued they expected that the “State Department would have paused, consulted and reassessed.” (Torbati et al, 2021). However, a State Department’s spokesman claimed the missiles sale “serve US and global interests by enhancing the Egyptian Navy’s ability to defend Egypt’s coastal areas and approaches to the Suez Canal” (Ibid).

Yet the US Congress was able to pass a legislation in 2021 to provide Egypt with \$75 million in military aid contingent on releasing political prisoners and other human rights issues, that does not include the provision that allowed State Department to waive requirement of providing military aid to Egypt contingent on human rights concerns. For the first time in 2021 since the allocation of the \$1.3 billion of military aid to Egypt since 1979, Congress removed the provision that include a waiver allowing the American administration to release funds by reporting to Congress that it is vital to the ‘national security interest of the United States’ to release the military aid to Egypt without conditioning it on human rights improvements and democracy promotion (Nader, 2022).

On the other hand, on April 2022, President El-Sisi received a delegation from US Congress, headed by Senator Richard Shelby. The delegation noted that Egypt is the “cornerstone for stability and security in the Middle East and the Arab world, and a key partner for the US in the region... due to Egypt’s effective and successful role in achieving security and stability in Egypt by combating terrorism and extremism in addition to the great efforts to achieve comprehensive development” the meeting also covered the positive role that Egypt plays in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, furthermore, it covered different ways to engage in political, economic, and military levels as well as regional and international developments (Presidency of the Arab Republic of Egypt, 2022).

Foreign Policy of the EU toward the Post Uprising Regime of Egypt

During the period of the Arab uprising of 2011 and after the interim governments were put in place, The EU has regularly sent emissaries and its top leaders like European Commission President Barroso and European Council President van Rompuy in Egypt to support continuous movements for democracy and human rights. The Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity (PfDSP) published on March 8th, 2011, also highlighted the EU’s initial policy response to the Arab uprising and how democracy and human

rights protection would be attained through the improvement of civil society groups (European Commission, 2011).

To understand EU's support to Egypt, we could note that the EU is concerned with two key threats to its national security: terrorism and migration. These threats are more concerning for Europe than the US because of Egypt's proximity to the EU. Europe can avoid another crisis in Egypt by having a long-term cooperation on areas of mutual interest such as migration, counter terrorism, security, and economic reform (El-Shimy, 2017).

Some Western scholars argue that the EU prefers stability and security in Egypt over developing a real impact in democracy or human rights. In addition, Western scholars claim that on bilateral levels, EU member states such as France, Germany, and United Kingdom (before Brexit) resumed their arms exports and economic deals with President El-Sisi following his visits. While democratic and human rights provisions are declared policy priorities, member states fail to send clear and consistent political messages to the regime of Egypt post the uprising.

All three European heavyweights share certain unflattering characteristics: a de-prioritisation of human rights in favour of the traditional security and stability-at-all-cost narrative, boosting economic ties with Egypt despite an unfavourable investment environment, and favouring so-called quiet diplomacy over public naming and shaming. At the EU level, they generally favour a normalisation of relations with Egypt, and are unwilling to take the lead on public *démarches*, claiming to respect the EU Common Position on arms exports but, at the same time, ink new deals with authoritarian regimes like Egypt's (Michou, 2016, p. 6).

But for EU institutions Egypt is fighting militants and terrorist groups and the situation in other neighboring countries is substantially out of order and the EU couldn't risk seeing Egypt as a failed state that is governed by terrorist. That's why the Council of the EU was condemning the terrorist attacks against security personnel and civilians in Sinai.

The EU condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks in the Sinai and other parts of Egypt, in which a number of civilians and security personnel have

been killed or injured. No cause can justify terrorist violence. The EU reaffirms its commitment to support the stability and security in Egypt (Council of the European Union, 2014).

It is clear from this EU official statement, that the EU is interested to preserve stability and security in Egypt post-June Revolution, under Interim President Adly Mansour (July 2013-June 2014). In addition, the EU has congratulated President El-Sisi for his victory, hoping that his regime would work with the EU in a constructive partnership. Aside from the bilateral visits and cooperation between President El-Sisi and European countries, President El-Sisi had also contacted the EU in the Sharm-el-Sheikh economic development summit on March 13-15, 2015. The summit: 'Egypt is the Future' aimed to support the development of the Egyptian economy. During the summit, the EU and post-June regime signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support Egypt's development with a grant amounting to 130 million euros. The MoU has highlighted the development of the EU Single Support Framework (SSF) for 2014-2015. The SSF for the year 2014-2015 included poverty alleviation, socio-economic protection, governance, and transparency.

According to the European Union External Action (the Diplomatic Service of the EU), high representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Commission Vice President, Federica Mogherini, visited Egypt in 2015, to revitalize bilateral relations and to work on many regional issues. Her speech supports Egypt to bring peace in the Middle East:

We, as the European Union, have insisted a lot in this last year, my first year in office, for a revitalisation of the Quartet initiative to bring peace in the Middle East, but also and specially to have a systematic involvement in the work of the Quartet of four key Arab players: Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab League. We believe that these four regional actors can play a very significant role to have a substantial peace process back in place (European Union External Action, 2015).

In 2015, the EU's Association Agreement with Egypt was reactivated after being suspended since 2011. As mentioned above, President El-Sisi has

visited some EU member countries where he concluded several economic, geostrategic, and arms agreements on bilateral levels.

To conclude, the EU has supported Egypt financially through the former European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) between 2014 and 2020. In addition, a new Neighborhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) frames their cooperation for the period 2021 to 2027. Lastly, under the EU External Investment Plan and the blending mechanisms of the Neighborhood Investment Platform (NIP), Egypt has benefited from over €620 million in blending grants, which have leveraged approximately €7 billion since 2008, in concessional loans from European Financial Institutions combined with public and private sector financing (European Commission, EU and Egypt).

Research Findings

The US and the EU had common foreign policies toward the security situation in Egypt, economic as well as political through securing the Suez Canal and protecting the security and stability of Israel from the Sinai insurgency. Both Western countries supported the regime of Egypt financially and militarily. For example, the Obama administration's MENA incentive fund and the European Union's SPRING program have been supporting the uprising of 2011 in Egypt (Hamed, 2012). Besides, both of the EU and the US share a rich background of political and economic links with Egypt. Furthermore, resuming US's annual delivery of military aid of \$1.3 billion is a clear argument of supporting the regime of Egypt post June 30, 2013. That was due to Egypt's strategic importance in the MENA region reflected in the common aim of the US and EU to protect the security of Israel through maintaining lasting stability in Egypt's Sinai Province.

However, the removal of President Mohamed Morsi from power for the EU was traumatic as for them he was the first elected president. The EU immediately released a statement following the ousting of Mohammed Morsi on July 4, 2013. In the official statement of HR/VP Ashton, she stated that the EU calls for swift action in Egypt to stabilize the country. She expressed hope that all sides return to the democratic process and hold new presidential and parliamentary elections (Hassan, 2015, p. 70).

The US experienced an internal debate between its government different branches. There was an internal discussion between the US Congress, the State Department, and the White House on how to adjust their

foreign policy toward Egypt in compliance with US' national security interests. Despite the importance of Egypt as a geostrategic partner for both the US and the EU and their common interest, as mentioned, there were some obstacles in fully supporting the regime of Egypt during the past decade and especially in the aftermath of June 30, 2013. The EU and US were unable to restore immediate direct diplomatic relations after June 30, 2013, due to the sensitive debate that took place between each Western partner and Egypt about the nature of the 2013 regime-change and the reception of the traumatic and violent events that ensued. The two Western partners needed affirmation from Egypt about the nature of the event that took place as many Western scholars perceived it as a military Coup that overthrew the first elected president of Egypt with violations to human rights of Mohamed Morsi's supporters. For the US, there was a high intensity debate within the US Congress about suspending the \$1.3 billion of annual military aid to Egypt for the first time in over thirty years due to the human rights violation claims.

Conclusion

Today, it is almost a decade since the June 30, 2013 Revolution and it is clear to say that prior to the uprisings in Egypt, the EU was calling for democracy promotion and human rights improvement; while in the aftermath of the uprisings, the EU was more concerned with security and stability in Egypt due to the critical situation in the region. This shift of EU's foreign policy can be explained by realism and national security interest of the EU to ensure the stability and security of Egypt and the MENA region. The EU's main interest in Egypt is to reinforce the country's ability to counter terrorism and illegal migration, in order to prevent future political unrest by helping to solve the economic hardships, and to ensure preserving its economic interests in Egypt and the MENA region to provide commercial opportunities for European firms.

US relations with Egypt has seen twists and turns in the past decade, at times the US explicitly states that Egypt is a key partner in the region whereas at other times the US suspended military aid to Egypt that is considered a crucial area in their relation since Egypt's Peace Accord with Israel in 1979. For the US, it has resumed the military aid since the Egyptian military is fully engaged in fighting different terrorist groups in the Sinai Peninsula, and this is an important national security interest for the US, hence, for the security and stability of Israel in the MENA region.

Even though there was a debated raging within the US Congress about the expediency of channelling \$1.3 billion of annual military funding to Egypt and the opportunity to condition it further on human rights' respect and the intra-European member states' widely diverging interests on Egypt. At the end, for both US and EU national security, it was important that Egypt continues its war on terrorism. Thus, a continued American and European commitment to Egypt's economic, political, military, security, and financial wellbeing is likely to remain an important issue.

From this study we can conclude that the US has enduring interests in Egypt and the security cooperation among the two countries is still important for US national security interests. The US supports sustaining Egypt's Peace Treaty with Israel of 1979 as it preserves the enduring peace and stability of the MENA region, and the Suez Canal safe passage preserves US economy. Further, due to the legacy of the Cold War, the US prevent Russian's influence and hegemony in the region. The US tries to restrain Russian's influence by forming strong ties with other countries in the region. The US provides Egypt with military assistance each year to maintain its peace treaty with Israel and to minimize the chance of Egypt to have potential arms sales with Russia. Considering the substantial financial amount of aid the US is providing to Egypt, we can conclude that Washington still considers the Egyptian regime's survival as a top priority for the US.

In addition, the EU has also provided Egypt with substantial assistance since Egypt is a big market for European arms and products, to prevent illegal migration and to counter terrorism activities in Sinai. These reasons allowed for more cooperation between the EU and Egypt. The EU and the US strongly believe that preserving lasting peace, security, and stability in Sinai, preserves stability and security of Israel and for the whole region. To conclude, Sinai's security is of crucial importance for the stability of Israel and, via Tel Aviv, to its two Western partners.

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