

In a joint statement on the U.S-Egypt Strategic Dialogue the U.S. Department of State noted on August 2nd 2015:

"The two sides renewed their commitment to the strategic relationship and resolved to take practical and specific steps to consolidate it. They further stressed that a long-term and strong Egypt-U.S. partnership, anchored in the common goals of their strategic ties, is vital for the peace, stability and prosperity of the region. The two sides agreed to hold the next round of the Strategic Dialogue in Washington, D.C. in 2016".

According to Aljazeera US Secretary of State John Kerry visited Cairo on Sunday 2nd August for meetings with his Egyptian counterpart Sameh Shoukry and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi where he said US-Egyptian relations were returning to a "stronger base" in bilateral ties despite tensions and human rights concerns. The development comes two days after the US delivered eight F-16 fighter jets to Egypt as part of a military support package. At the same time, he acknowledged stress in the US-Egypt relationship over human rights and said the US would continue to press Egypt on the arrests of dissidents and journalists and mass trials.

By contrast a few months earlier: a headline in the Atlantic 16th January 2015 read: Is Egypt on the Verge of Another Uprising? The article argued that the regime the Egyptians overthrew 4 years ago after storming Tahrir Square has returned. "In the face of relentless pressure and violence from the authorities, most of the revolutionary movements have been side-lined or snuffed out".

The Muslim Brotherhood won the November 2011 elections and the presidential elections on 24th June 2012 Morsi picked up 13.2 million votes out of just over 26 million, giving him about 51%.

Having been declared the fifth President of Egypt Morsi, instead of acting as a President for the country, acted as a political party chief. He swiftly moved to get rid of Army Chief Field Marshall Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, and replaced him with the younger General Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. Morsi then cancelled a constitutional declaration aimed at curbing presidential powers. In November 2012 he stripped constitutional court judges of all powers. Secular and liberal Egyptians felt excluded and disenfranchised. Once again the people protested and denounced Morsi as the new Mubarak. The economic situation got worse, prices of essential commodities shot up, the country suffered repeated power cuts and fuel shortages. The protests grew and

grew culminating on 30th June 2013 with millions of Egyptians assembling in Cairo. The army intervened, backed by liberals, the Copts and Al-Azhar Authority (the highest religious authority in the Muslim Sunni world). Morsi was removed from office by the army.

On May 16th May 2015 an Egyptian Court pronounced death sentences on ousted President Mohamed Morsi and more than 100 other people over a mass prison break in 2011. Liberals, seculars and the Coptic Christians welcomed el-Sisi's decisive action.

Many observers and analysts believe that the harsh tactics used by the security forces are taking Egyptians to the days of the Mubarak era. The courts have lost their independence and impartiality. The judiciary has been politicised and is seen as a tool of the regime. The chronic problems of poverty, unemployment, acute housing shortages, and inadequate health care system remain unaddressed and have even got worse.

Outlawing protests and the crackdown against Islamists and outspoken journalists are real indications that the military is in charge. It was reported on 17th August 2015 that President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has ratified an anti-terrorism law which stipulates exorbitant fines, and possible suspension from employment, for "false" reporting on militant attacks. The BBC reported: Mr Sisi has overseen a crackdown on Islamists in which hundreds have been killed, tens of thousands detained and scores sentenced to death, including Mr Morsi. The government claims the Muslim Brotherhood is a terrorist group, while the Brotherhood argues that it is committed to peaceful activism.

To complicate matters further the media revealed that a military court in Egypt has sentenced 26 army officers to jail, after being convicted on charges that included plotting for a military coup. The officers, four of whom are retired colonels, were given sentences ranging from 10 to 25 years. This underlines the level of discontent among the top echelons of the army. The signs are not good. Human rights violations are common place. Some see that the military authority is sowing the seeds of a new revolution.

Why does the West tolerate Egypt and are not attack el-Sisi? Despite all of the bad news, US-Egyptian ties are finally thawing, after two years of strain, doubt and uncertainty. Egypt had been considered a solid ally to the West since the early 1970s when President Sadat expelled

Soviet advisers and proceeded to reorient Egypt towards West. In October 1977 President Sadat paid a historic landmark visit to Israel, beginning process that led to 1979 peace treaty, return of occupied Sinai Peninsula, Egypt had become a major beneficiary of US financial aid. In 1991 Egypt joined allied coalition to expel Iraqi troops from Kuwait.

Some analysts are critical of the US policy of ignoring freedom and human rights in favour of security and stability. Middle East experts say the US is supporting Egypt despite the absence of democratic rule in the country. It is repressive, it is authoritarian but maybe that's due to the existence of terrorist threats. Egypt still has a strong civil society and almost independent, vibrant media. It is the biggest Arab country. It is a robust linchpin in the fight against terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism and the West supports Egypt efforts in defeating al Qaeda and ISIS in the Sinai. Despite all the short-comings Egypt remains a regional power and a bulwark against Islamic extremism and terrorism.

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