Undergraduate Problems: Middle East Issues
AFST 391.004, CRN#4248

U.S. Foreign Policy in Egypt

Ambassador Roger Pierce
November 11, 2011
Egypt Overview

- Population: 82m; largest in the Arab World
- Religion: 90% Muslim (mostly Sunni); 9 Coptic
- Natural Resources: Oil, nat. gas, minerals
- Politics: Mubarak resignation; Constitution dissolved; Supreme Council of Armed Forces in control; continued State of Emergency; police force disbanded; elections promised.
- Challenges: limited arable land; dependence on the Nile; poor living conditions; desertification; high unemployment
Bilateral Relationship

• Egypt a leading US regional ally in seeking and maintaining regional peace, countering extremism, and developing solutions to local and regional challenges of pol and econ reform.
• Despite differences & frictions with the U.S., relationship evolved under Mubarak beyond the MEPP to an independent bilateral friendship
• Egypt represented moderate voice in Arab councils, relationship w/ Israel. It could persuade other Arab councils/states to join Peace Process & normalize relations w/U.S. & Israel
• Pres. Obama’s 2009 New Beginnings Speech
  – Focal point for US engagement w/ Arab and Muslim world (entrepreneurship, S&T, and education)
Bilateral Relationship cont’d

• Econ and Mil Assistance
  – Anchored strategic partnership & contributed to Egypt-Israel peace for > 30 yrs
  – FY 2011 – FY 2013 total assistance to Egypt - 1.55b decreasing in real terms, purchasing power, and econ impact.
  – 1.3 b FMF (acquisitions, upgrades, modifications & training)
Bilateral Relationship cont’d

• Mil-to-Mil Relationship
  – Probably the strongest aspect of the strategic partnership
    • Gen. Zinni “Egypt most important country in AOR because of access to the region.”
    • Clinton Admin – “Most prominent player in Arab world & key US ally in Middle East.”
Bilateral Relationship cont’d

• Mil-to-Mil Relationship
  – Egypt 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest non-NATO recipient of aid, after Israel.
  – Most powerful military on African continent, 2\textsuperscript{nd} largest in the Middle East, after Israel.
Bilateral Relationship cont’d

• Tensions
  – Egyptian unwillingness to send troops to Iraq & Afghanistan in peace stabilization missions
  – Strongly backed U.S. CT efforts after 9/11, but refused to send troops to Afghanistan.
  – Opposed U.S. mil intervention in Iraq; occupation after war
  – Refused to send troops under UN umbrella
  – Sense of betrayal as Mubarak abandoned
  – Opposed direct assistance to NGOs/Civil Society
U.S. Goals & Interests in Egypt

• Peace and Security
  – Partner w/ Egypt to address regional challenges, including promoting peace w/ Israel and its neighbors
  – Partner w/ Egypt on regional issues such as stabilizing conditions in Gaza, Sudan, Iraq, and Lebanon, and confronting challenges from Iran and regional terrorist groups
  – Ensure secure staging rights and priority U.S. military passage thru Suez Canal & Egyptian airspace
  – Modernize Egyptian military w/ U.S.-origin defense systems & training of Egyptian mil ofcrs to improve interoperability of our mil forces.
U.S. Goals & Interests cont’d

• Governing Justly and Democratically
  – Work w/ GOE and civil society partners to consolidate and strengthen political reform gains, including freedom of expression and freedom of association
  – Expand direct support to Egyptian civil society to ensure it is an independent, effective voice for the needs and aspirations of Egyptian people.
  – Expand civic education and citizen participation in the political process
  – Strengthen local governance through decentralization
  – Strengthen the independence of judicial institutions
U.S. Goals & Interests cont’d

• Investing in People
  – Help Egypt create human capacity it needs to compete globally
    • Focus on education, particularly access for Egyptian children to quality education relevant to marketplace needs (emphasis on S&T)
    • Broaden access to education for girls and children in rural areas
    • Improve teaching at all levels
    • Provide opportunities for advanced study in science & math
    • Help Egypt to address inequalities of health services to its poor
U.S. Goals & Interests cont’d

• Help Egypt to reduce dramatic poverty rates and continue economic reforms (dealing with subsidies and privatization)

• Thru Strategic Economic Dialogue, seek to liberalize bilateral trade and investment
U.S. Goals & Interests cont’d

• Public Diplomacy
  – Broaden engagement with Egyptians, including on issues such as science, education, democracy, and civil society
  – Expand outreach to young, non-elite audiences thru innovative and decentralized programming
  – Increase opportunities for English language training to non-traditional targets
  – Expand opportunities for study in the U.S.