

Obama Administration Should Exit the Bloody Mess in Egypt

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Secretary of State John Kerry originally refused to characterize the coup in Egypt as a coup. Rather, he effectively endorsed the new military regime: "In effect, they were restoring democracy."

Too bad the hundreds shot dead on Cairo streets won't be able to vote in the new restored democracy. Washington needs to "reset" relations with Egypt.

As I wrote [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#), there never was any doubt that the Egyptian military had staged a coup, and that it was essential for Washington to distance itself from the coming disaster. President Mohamed Morsi was no friend of liberty, but the army had no excuse for destroying democracy. Morsi did not control the military, police, or courts: he wasn't much of a prospective dictator!

The bloody crackdown in Egypt has clarified events. The military staged a coup. The civilian regime created by Gen. Abdul-Fattah al-Sisi was a façade. The secular liberals who hoped to ride into power atop army tanks sold their nation's future for a mess of pottage. The military's attempt to destroy the Muslim Brotherhood guarantees a violent future, likely including terrorism and perhaps ending in civil war. Despite having dumped \$75 billion worth of "aid" into Cairo's coffers over the years, Washington has no "leverage."

Yet the Obama administration continues to mouth meaningless platitudes. President Barack Obama said that the violence "must stop." To make that happen he said the U.S. was pulling out of planned joint military maneuvers with Egypt. No doubt, Gen. al-Sisi will be devastated not to be able to enjoy tea with Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel while watching Egyptian soldiers shooting U.S.-made weapons purchased with U.S.-provided dollars.

Secretary John Kerry was more prolix, with these gems: "The promise of the 2011 revolution has simply never been fully realized." The outcome "will be shaped in the hours ahead, in the days ahead." The Egyptian government should "respect basic human rights including freedom of peaceful assembly and due process under the law." The state of emergency "should end as soon as possible." "The only sustainable path for either side is one toward a political solution." And my personal favorite: despite the bloodshed, "I am convinced that that path is in fact still open."

To limit future blowback after having blessed the coup and resulting military government, the administration must comply with U.S. law, which requires ending aid to any nation after military ouster of a democratically-elected government. Despite Barack Obama morphing into Bill Clinton by quibbling over the definition of "is," even administration lawyers reportedly

concluded that the statute applied to Egypt. Now the administration will look like an apologist for murder if it fails to act.

If the administration fails to follow the law and good sense, then Congress should step in. Although the Senate rejected a recent proposal by Sen. Rand Paul (R-Kent.) to end aid to Egypt, events have proved him right. Both chambers should vote to end money for a military regime which appears determined to wreck a nation. The president might veto an aid cut-off, but Congress could vote to override.

Foreign aid does not promote economic development. Nor does it buy political leverage. In Egypt all decades of "foreign assistance" have achieved is to successively identify the U.S. with two army-backed dictators, an unpopular Islamist president, and a brutal military regime. Washington should say no more and leave Egypt's tragic future to be decided by the Egyptians.