

BREAKING NEWS: Jan-Feb Issue of The National Interest Out Now

It's Time to End U.S. Aid to Egypt

THE SKEPTICS

Malou Innocent | January 2, 2012

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In recent weeks, a [flood of graphic videos and images](#) have surfaced showing Egypt's [military police](#) brutally clubbing protesters. Some footage shows demonstrators lying motionless on the ground as they are savagely beaten.

“Recent events in Egypt have been particularly shocking,” [said](#) Secretary of State Hillary Clinton last week. But perhaps more “shocking” than these recent events is the foreign largesse sustaining it. For FY2012, the Obama administration [requested](#) \$1.551 billion in U.S. aid to Egypt. That should be [scrapped](#).

Administration planners [praised](#) Egypt's armed forces for exercising restraint last spring. But ever since, the military caretaker government has shown itself to be anything but restrained. General Abdel Moneim Kato, a military adviser in the Orwellian-sounding Morale Affairs Department, [said](#) protesters “deserve to be thrown into Hitler's ovens.” Reminiscent of former President Hosni Mubarak's twenty-nine-year tyranny, military tribunals have [sentenced](#) political activists to prison for insulting the military, violating the national curfew and defying a ban on demonstrations. Since October, [nearly one hundred people](#) have been killed in clashes between [heavily armed](#) government forces and [rock- and firebomb-throwing](#) protesters. Promilitary [fliers](#) distributed in taxis blame the United States, Israel and other forces for causing the chaos. Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Mohamed Kamel Amr, in response to Clinton's criticism of the mistreatment of protesters, [said](#), “Egypt does not accept any interference in its internal affairs.”

Washington's [servile client state](#) now bites the hand that feeds. After all, despite provisos affixed to U.S. aid, powerful forces in Cairo seem comfortable in the knowledge that their [gravy train](#) won't be stopping anytime soon. According to a [report](#) published last month by the Congressional Research Service, in September the [Senate Committee on Appropriations](#) attached conditions to the \$1.551 billion in U.S. assistance. Those conditions stress that no U.S. funds may be provided to Egypt unless:

the Secretary of State certifies to the Committees on Appropriations that such government is meeting its obligations under the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty and that that the Government of Egypt has held free and fair elections and is implementing policies to protect the rights of journalists, due process, and freedoms of expression and association.

Overwhelming evidence shows that Egypt has not met any of the aforementioned obligations. But rather than end the U.S. government's generous assistance to that country's dictatorless tyranny, last week President Barack Obama signed an executive order setting up a "[National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security](#)." As part of broader "peacemaking efforts around the world," it plans to "accelerate, institutionalize, and better coordinate" U.S. government efforts to "advance women's inclusion in peace negotiations, peacebuilding activities, and conflict prevention."

So in essence, Washington continues to tip the scale on both sides. It backs Cairo's protesters and the authoritarian government that's [beating](#) and [killing](#) them. As a friend of mine who works for the U.S. government in Cairo told me a few weeks back, even if the Egyptian people vote to bring Islamists to power, it is their prerogative to do so. (Note: this person, who took a similar position on the Palestinian elections of 2006, holds a minority view within the government.) Come what may, it's time for the U.S. government to leave Egypt's future "[to the Egyptian people](#)."