

US FAILS MISERABLY TO HOLD EGYPT ACCOUNTABLE, CONTINUES AID DESPITE ABUSES

On the very day that Egypt's Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy is in Washington to meet with John Kerry, a court in Egypt, for the second time in just over a month, has sentenced hundreds of citizens to death in proceedings that lasted only minutes. Proving the moral depravity of the Obama administration in its dealings with Egypt, the mass death sentence issued a month ago had no impact, as the administration announced only a few short weeks later that it was ending the slight delay that the US had imposed last October on delivery of ten Apache attack helicopters.

Last August, when Egypt's military ousted the government of Mohamed Morsi, I noted how our government was too cowardly to use the approximately \$1.5 billion in aid it gives Egypt annually for the full leverage it could achieve in attempting to force Egypt to cease the atrocities which at that time were mostly killings of civilians but have now moved on to a complete banning of the Muslim Brotherhood and outrageous levels of suppression of the press through arrests of journalists.

Here is the weak tea last October on the delay in military assistance (and note that the Post insists on including disruptions in aid that were applied during Morsi's rule to inflate the numbers here):

U.S. officials on Wednesday sought to characterize the suspension of some forms of aid as temporary and said they aspire to maintain a robust military and diplomatic partnership with Egypt.

Besides F-16 fighter jets, whose delivery was suspended in July, Washington will not be sending Apache helicopters, M1 tanks or Harpoon missiles under existing contracts, officials told reporters in a conference call. In addition, \$260 million in cash payment promised to Egypt's previous government will continue to be suspended. The money was to go for debt relief and general expenses, and been held up over the Morsi government's failure to come to an agreement with the International Monetary Fund on economic reforms.

"This is not meant to be permanent," one senior official said during the call, which was conducted on the condition of anonymity for unspecified reasons. "This is meant to be continuously reviewed."

Considering that the first mass death sentence case verdict was rendered on March 24 and the announcement that shipment of the Apache helicopters would be resumed was announced April 22, it seems likely that the bit about continuously reviewing the disruption in shipment wasn't aimed at looking for improved behavior on Egypt's part. Instead, we are left to wonder whether the review was aimed at finding a time when the public's attention is elsewhere (Russian sanctions!), so that resuming aid will generate little of the outrage it deserves.

Of course, resuming the aid required bending some rules:

The United States has decided to resume delivery of Apache helicopters to Egypt, the Pentagon announced late Tuesday, backtracking on a decision officials made last summer following the country's military coup and its violent aftermath.

The Obama administration opted to go

ahead with the delivery of 10 aircraft to help Egypt combat cells of extremists in the Sinai, even though Washington is unable to meet congressional criteria for the full resumption of aid.

Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel told his Egyptian counterpart, Gen. Sedki Sobhy, in a phone call Tuesday that the United States is “not yet able to certify that Egypt is taking steps to support a democratic transition,” Rear. Adm. John Kirby, a Pentagon spokesman, said in a statement released at 10 p.m. Hagel urged his counterpart to “demonstrate progress on a more inclusive transition that respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all Egyptians,” the statement said.

Here is the New York Times on the two mass sentencings:

An Egyptian court here on Monday sentenced to death the spiritual leader of the Muslim Brotherhood and more than 680 other people after a swift mass trial on charges of inciting or committing acts of violence that led to the destruction of a police station and the killing of an officer.

The verdict, after a trial lasting only a few minutes, came just a month after the same judge drew condemnation from around the world for sentencing [529 other people to death](#) in a similarly lightning-fast mass trial. The judge, Sayedd Yousef, affirmed the death sentences Monday of about 40 of the defendants in that mass trial and commuted the others to life in prison, which is understood here to mean 25 years.

Will Obama and Kerry be depraved enough to

praise Egypt for changing some 490 or so instantly issued death sentences to life sentences instead?

Word is that Fahmy's visit with Kerry is meant to "redirect relations between Egypt and America". So far, I see no evidence that the US has any intent for that redirection to have any components that would improve human rights or end brutal repression.