

Daily Press Briefing: Discussion on Egypt

Contents

July 15, 2014	3
July 10, 2014	6
June 26, 2014	11
June 25, 2014	12
June 24, 2014	14
June 23, 2014	22
June 18, 2014	33
June 17, 2014	35
June 12, 2014	37
June 11, 2014	38
June 10, 2014	39
June 9, 2014	41
June 5, 2014	45
June 4, 2014	51
June 3, 2014	54
May 30, 2014	55
May 29, 2014	58
May 27, 2014	62
May 23, 2014	63
May 22, 2014	64
May 21, 2014	66
May 8, 2014	69

May 7, 2014	72
April 29, 2014.....	73
April 28, 2014.....	76
April 25, 2014.....	80
April 23, 2014.....	83
April 9, 2014.....	89
April 7, 2014.....	91
April 2, 2014.....	93
April 1, 2014.....	96
March 27, 2014.....	98
March 26, 2014.....	101
March 25, 2014.....	103
March 24, 2014.....	111
March 20, 2014.....	113
March 11, 2014.....	114
March 10, 2014.....	115
March 7, 2014.....	117
March 5, 2014.....	124
March 4, 2014.....	128
February 27, 2014.....	131
February 25, 2014.....	132
February 24, 2014.....	134
February 14, 2014.....	137
January 29, 2014.....	140

July 15, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt and the Middle East Peace Process
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: On the ceasefire, who is there to negotiate with? The Egyptians came up with it with some heavy U.S. work, I would expect. The Israelis agreed to it. He's not going to talk to Hamas, or is he?

MS. PSAKI: No. That has not changed.

QUESTION: So who would he negotiate with?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I wouldn't maybe put it in the form of negotiating as much as playing a role and advising, or going to any of these countries that can play a role and working with relevant parties on the ground.

QUESTION: In other words, going to third – going to countries that might be able to apply pressure to Hamas to accept it?

MS. PSAKI: Sure. That's part of what he could do.

QUESTION: Because --

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

QUESTION: That is part of what he could do? But there's certainly no plan to talk to Hamas, correct?

MS. PSAKI: No, there's not. And there's no current plan to travel back to the region either.

QUESTION: Here's something.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So the – just to go back to what we were talking about before, the Egyptians have invited Palestinian factions – and that's to include President Abbas and possibly – obviously, members of Hamas would have to be part of that negotiating team because they're the party enacted in the – engaged in the fighting. So feasibly, could Secretary Kerry go to – be meeting with those – the entire delegation which might include Hamas, or do you completely rule that out? Or would he just meet maybe with President Abbas on the side or something like that?

MS. PSAKI: Elise, we're getting way too ahead of where we are currently. We don't even have a plan to go back to the region at this point in time. So we'll have to evaluate --

QUESTION: Well, you do have a plan, but you just don't have a date. Is that right?

MS. PSAKI: We'll have to evaluate what productive role we can play, whether that's here, whether that's in another country. And we'll, I'm sure, keep talking about it.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Has Secretary Kerry spoken with President Abbas about the cease-fire?

MS. PSAKI: He has not spoken with him over the last couple of days, but I would remind you that we obviously have a consul general on the ground, we have a very active team there, and they've been closely engaged with him and his team.

QUESTION: Given that – all of the conflicts over the last several years in this – the violent conflicts have been because Hamas is a party to them. And clearly they're the ones, like, with the influence to stop this bloody conflict. Possibly have – would they end their resistance potentially, that there would be an opportunity for the peace process to move forward. Do you think that there was a mistake all those years ago to boycott Hamas when it won those elections? I mean, do you not think that engaging with them as a party that actually has an opportunity to end the conflict would've done some good?

MS. PSAKI: I think it's nearly impossible to look back and make an evaluation, and I'm not going to do that from the podium.

QUESTION: Only nearly?

MS. PSAKI: It's not impossible.

QUESTION: It is.

QUESTION: ... so you mentioned few times that this – the proposal, the Egyptian proposal is still on the table.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Are you expecting or – the possibility of making some changes in the content of it, or just try to convince both sides to accepted it?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think as you heard or you saw in our statement this morning, we believe that this is a goodwill effort to put a cease-fire in place. The Egyptians deserve time and space to be able to make this initiative work. So I'm not going to speculate on whether anything could be changed. Obviously, the effort at this point is on working with Hamas to see if they will engage in this ceasefire.

QUESTION: Just to follow-up, why I'm saying this is because there were some reports regarding two issues, which was many issues of disagreement from Hamas. One side is – was the border passing gates with Egypt, and the other was related to some money payment for the employments that they are not paid. So all these two issues are on the table, or you are not aware of these issues?

MS. PSAKI: I would point you to the Egyptians to answer any questions on what they may or may not be considering.

QUESTION: There is another thing, which is like two mentioned – two publicly – publicly, two issues were mentioned at the beginning of this proposal: that – first the cease-fire, and second that the Israelis and Palestinians will sit together in Egypt somewhere and discuss these issues. Are there – these two issues are – United States are going to be part of it or not?

MS. PSAKI: The United States obviously – I'm not aware of our plans at this point to be a part of it. They – this hasn't been scheduled yet, so I will – why don't we see how this plays out and determine whether there's a productive role we can play.

...

QUESTION: -- on this issue. One of your allies, Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey, today in his speech before parliament accused your other ally, Israel, of committing massacres against the Palestinians, that it is committing terrorism by the state. And he basically said that it's shameful that the world remains silent. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. PSAKI: I haven't seen those specific comments, Said.

July 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt and the Middle East Peace Process
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: -- fighting? Is it the position of the Government of the United States that Israel is conducting itself in this bombardment, the ongoing bombardment of Gaza, within the constraints and rules of international law for its self-defense?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me first, Said, just so I don't forget to do this, just update you all that the Secretary spoke with President Abbas this morning. I know I mentioned to all of you that he had planned to do that. He, as you know, had already spoken with Prime Minister Netanyahu just yesterday. During both of those calls, the Secretary reiterated our concern over the escalating tensions and restated his own willingness and the willingness of the United States to engage robustly in helping to stop the rocket fire so we can restore calm as soon as possible.

And Said, to answer your question, that is really what our focus is on, is using all tools at our disposal to bring an end to the rocket fire that is threatening the innocent lives of civilians in Israel and that is certainly posing a threat in the region.

QUESTION: So his effort would be focused on stopping the rocket fire from Gaza, but not to stop Israeli bombardment of Gaza?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think it's important to note here that no country should have to live under the constant threat of indiscriminate violence against innocent civilians. That's what we're looking at here. I think it's important context here that Hamas is a terrorist organization. They have been launching indiscriminate number of attacks against Israel. Israel, we – of course, as I had mentioned yesterday, but it's worth repeating, we are – it's clear that civilians have been killed, that – including children. This is deeply tragic and we have been continuing to call on both sides to take steps to protect civilians. I would note that while the Israelis have taken steps to try to prevent civilian casualties by warning – providing warning in advance, that is not what, of course, Hamas is doing, and they have continued their indiscriminate attacks against – including civilian areas in Israel.

QUESTION: So you consider that Israel dropping leaflets of calling – or calling people on the phone and so on to terrify them, basically, to leave their home is a great humanitarian gesture?

MS. PSAKI: I think warning that there may be a response attack to the indiscriminate attacks of Hamas, a terrorist organization, is different and certainly important to point out in comparison with the attacks that are coming into parts of Israel, yes.

QUESTION: So do you believe that the utility of an F-16 to bomb a home and kill five civilians was appropriately done in accordance with the laws governing the transfer of weapons to Israel?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Said, first – and let me just repeat, because it’s important to note here, that it’s clear that civilians have been killed, and certainly that’s of concern to us, and that’s one of the reasons that we have been certainly calling for all sides to de-escalate tensions on the ground. It’s tragic and our condolences go out to the families, but I would remind you who is at fault here, and that is Hamas and the indiscriminate attacks that they have launched against Israel.

QUESTION: Do you agree with the Secretary General of the United Nations who just called for an immediate ceasefire?

MS. PSAKI: I think our focus, Said, is the – is on using all tools at our disposal to stop rocket fire so that we can restore calm, and that’s what we feel that the immediate focus should be on.

QUESTION: Okay. So you are not calling for a ceasefire; you’re calling for the rockets to stop from being launched from Gaza, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Well, certainly that would contribute to a reduction in violence.

...

QUESTION: Okay. I want to follow up. So does that also call for the Israelis to stop their immediate – to stop their bombardment of Gaza, or no?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Said, again, as I’ve stated several times in here from the briefing room in response to your questions, there’s a difference between Hamas, a terrorist organization that’s indiscriminately attacking innocent civilians in areas where there are innocent civilians in Israel, and the right of Israel to respond and protect their own civilians. And that’s what we’re seeing on the ground take place.

QUESTION: Are you keeping count of the innocent civilians on both sides that have been lost in this latest (inaudible)?

MS. PSAKI: The death of any innocent civilian is a tragedy, and our hearts and prayers go out to those families. And certainly a reduction of civilian casualties preventing that, ending that, is in everyone’s interests.

QUESTION: You said --

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead.

QUESTION: On the same topic, in the same topic, given the complexity of the situation between Israel and Gaza, do you think Egypt could play a role, a mediation role to ease the tension? And as you may know, in the past, Washington reached out to Qatar and –

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- Egypt to help the Israelis and the Palestinian ease the tensions between them. Do you think now Egypt can play a role? Would the State Department ask Egypt – the Egyptian Government to do that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, part of the Secretary's effort has been reaching out to countries in the region, including Qatar, including Egypt. I would note, as you know, historically there's a difference between the relationship between the prior government to Hamas and the current government to Hamas. So I will leave that to others to analyze on how we can influence and who is most influential.

QUESTION: Yeah, but the Egyptian military has been always in good relationship with Hamas. So why not now?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, any country in the region that can play a role in bringing an end to the rocket fire from Hamas we're certainly going to be engaged with. But I think it's important to note the difference between the governments and their relationship with Hamas. And I leave it to others to analyze whether they'll be able to influence them.

QUESTION: What specifically was the Secretary meaning by his willingness to engage? What is the Administration prepared to do to help stop the rocket fire and to perhaps persuade the Israelis not to launch any sort of ground offensive?

MS. PSAKI: Well, he's clearly engaging with both the Israelis and the Palestinians, as evidenced by his calls, but he's also referring to discussions with other countries in the region. And again, I would note that the goals we're looking at here – and the Secretary mentioned this earlier today, so you can certainly quote him, but our focus right now is on saving innocent lives, trying to de-escalate in a way that accomplishes that while allowing Israel to exercise its right of self-defense and protecting as many civilians and, of course, those in the region as best as we can. But engaging with the parties as well as having discussions with countries in the region is something we're already doing, and the Secretary is – was reiterating his commitment to continuing that level of engagement.

QUESTION: What kind of – what did he tell President Abbas specifically? Did he give him advice on how to engage, given that Abbas technically does not have any legal authority over Gaza? I mean, what can he do and what did – what does this Administration believe that Abbas can do given the complex legal situation?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I'm not going to go into greater detail on their discussion, but clearly the discussions that the Secretary is having with any leader in the region is about how we can de-escalate and we are open to discussing and using all avenues to do that. So certainly the Secretary discusses the conversations that he has having with other leaders in the region, as well as what steps can be taken to bring an end to the rocket fire from Gaza.

...

QUESTION: -- because I don't understand. You keep saying, "We want to put an end to the rocket firing." Are you calling for a simultaneous ceasefire that should take place from both sides at the same time? Or do you just want the Palestinians to stop firing their rockets?

MS. PSAKI: Well, let me be clear.

QUESTION: It's very simple.

MS. PSAKI: It's not accurate to say it's quote/unquote "the Palestinians." This is Hamas, a terrorist organization that is launching --

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. PSAKI: Let me finish -- that is launching these rockets. Obviously, if the rockets are -- if the rocket fire is brought to an end, I don't think anybody's preference, including the Israelis, is an escalation of this. Nobody wants to see a ground invasion. That's why it's so important for Hamas to stop the rocket fire against Israeli citizens immediately. That step will reduce tension, will de-escalate, and that's why we're having discussions with a range of leaders in the region.

QUESTION: Is the United States counseling against a ground invasion?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think the Israelis themselves have said that that is not -- that they don't want to see a ground invasion. Nobody wants to see that. And so de-escalating and taking steps to de-escalate is certainly what our focus is on.

QUESTION: Nonetheless they are amassing troops around Gaza and getting ready for a land invasion.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think, Said, as I've mentioned, because of the indiscriminate attacks from Hamas and the rocket fire that's coming in, Israel is exercising its right to self-defense. I think it's in everyone's interest to de-escalate the situation, to prevent a ground invasion or a ground component of this, and to save the lives of innocent civilians. And those are the -- that's our focus at this important point in time.

QUESTION: What can Abbas then do to influence Hamas?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, we're having that discussion with him, and he's the expert on that and what he has the ability to do and not do. But certainly he's an important player in this, and that's one of the reasons the Secretary spoke with him.

QUESTION: Is the -- has the Secretary or is it the Administration urging the Israelis against a ground offensive?

MS. PSAKI: Well, they're -- we're having a discussion with them on how to de-escalate. And clearly, our focus remains on steps that we can take, steps that other countries can take to

influence Hamas and bring an end to the rocket fire, and that's really what we're counseling at this point in time.

QUESTION: And can you say what discussions the U.S. has had with Egypt in particular about trying to de-escalate?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the Secretary has been in touch with the foreign minister, and certainly any country and any leader who can play a role in influencing Hamas and bringing an end to the rocket fire we'll remain engaged with.

QUESTION: Did the Secretary phone the Egyptian foreign minister?

MS. PSAKI: He was in touch with him over the last couple of days, yes.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

June 26, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: -- on Egypt. If there's anything new on -- in terms of contacts with the Egyptians about --

MS. HARF: Nothing new. We've been in continual contact with them, but nothing new to highlight.

QUESTION: And then --

QUESTION: Any more deliveries? No deliveries of additional material?

MS. HARF: No, nothing has changed there. No.

June 25, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Just to clarify, yesterday you said that no aid was being withheld from the Egyptian Government.

MS. HARF: No. I don't think I said that. Let me just – let's go back to the aid numbers here. I know there were some questions. So for 2014 FMF, \$650 million has been appropriated. We recently obligated \$572 million of that in FY 2014. And we went into these numbers a little bit yesterday, Lucas. They were notified in late April. So 78 million of that, of the notified overall 650, two missile systems and 10 Apache helicopters remain on hold pending further discussions with Congress. Just clearing up the numbers there. I know – I'm sorry there was some confusion on this over the last few days.

QUESTION: So none of the Apaches that were suspended – whose delivery was suspended last year have yet been delivered, correct?

MS. HARF: Correct.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: All 10 remain in storage in Fort Hood, Texas.

QUESTION: Oh, thank you for that detail.

MS. HARF: You're welcome.

QUESTION: And have there been any conversations in the last 24 hours between – at a high level about the journalists issue?

MS. HARF: I can check. Not – from the Secretary? Let me check --

QUESTION: Well, I mean, I don't know. I mean, you are continuing to raise this with the Egyptians, right?

MS. HARF: Of course. Yeah. Let me see if there's any details about that.

...

QUESTION: Just one more question on Egypt. Yesterday at the White House, Josh Earnest said that additional assistance remains on hold. Is this the additional assistance?

MS. HARF: Yeah. That's what he's referring to.

Yeah.

QUESTION: But you know in the Congress they are trying to propose legislation to reduce the aid package by 30 percent. Are you aware?

MS. HARF: Is this the Schiff Amendment?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: So here I'm going to comment on something with Congress.

QUESTION: On pending legislation, my God.

QUESTION: Yeah.

QUESTION: How surprising. (Laughter.)

MS. HARF: So this amendment, if we're referring to the same one, would have limited our --

QUESTION: Yes, we are.

MS. HARF: -- would have limited our ability -- I don't think it actually passed. I think it was pulled down, but let me double-check on that -- to respond to emerging needs in Egypt and divert it from the focus of our request for Egypt. And we were already supporting many of the areas addressed in the amendment.

QUESTION: Thank you.

June 24, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Well, let's start – there's so many things that we could start with. Let's start with Egypt --

MS. HARF: Okay.

QUESTION: -- simply because we started with that yesterday. And I'm aware that the White House has spoken about this today already, but I want to get your take on al-Sisi's comments this morning, or this morning our time, I guess, that he would not take any step to interfere with – is the way he termed it – to interfere with the court's decision. What do you make of that? And if it wasn't a slap in the face yesterday, the sentence, what is this today after the repeated calls from you, from the Secretary, from National Security Advisor Rice, for a pardon or a commutation?

MS. HARF: Well, again, as we said yesterday, the Egyptian Government should review all of the political sentences and verdicts pronounced during the last few years, including these last ones with the journalists, and consider all remedies, including pardons. I think, look, this obviously makes it harder to move forward on things they want. As I said yesterday, we will continue reevaluating our relationship. I know there's things in the pipeline. But again, we've been very clear about the steps Egypt needs to take – excuse me – and this is, I think quite frankly, as you saw the Secretary say yesterday, not the direction we need to see.

QUESTION: You spoke of things that are in the pipeline. Can you be more specific?

MS. HARF: Well, as – we've talked about it a little bit. As you know, there's Apaches. We talked about those. We've talked --

QUESTION: Are – but I guess I'm trying to --

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: One, can you be more specific about what's in the pipeline other than the Apaches? And two, are you suggesting that somehow that now those are in danger and in jeopardy of not going through?

MS. HARF: I'm not suggesting anything specific. As I said, this – look, clearly this will make it harder to move forward with things they want. There are some things in train. I don't have anything more to add than we had yesterday. You know that we recently obligated \$572 million as part of our overall FY14 FMF that we notified to Congress in April. So there's a process that's ongoing, but this has clearly been a difficult time, I would say – what we've seen particularly over the last few days, but over the last few years in terms of these arrests and sentences.

QUESTION: Are you saying that some or all of the 572 million could be pulled back?

MS. HARF: I'm not suggesting anything specific. I know you want me to get into specifics. As I said --

QUESTION: Well, no, I just --

MS. HARF: -- in general, this will make it harder. Nothing specific to report in terms of what that might mean.

QUESTION: Right. But is that based -- that 572 million is gone? There's no way to get it back?

MS. HARF: Let me see on that. So we've recently obligated it, 572 million of the 650 million in FY14; 78 million of that FMF request and 10 Apache helicopters have not gone forward, obviously pending further discussions with Congress, as I said yesterday, and have continued to consult closely with Congress. So it's my understanding that it's not all out the door.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: So in fact --

MS. HARF: And I can check with our numbers folks as well.

QUESTION: But from what you just said, it sounds to me as though about half, plus the 10 -- of the FMF, plus the 10 helicopters, have not yet been delivered. Are you saying --

MS. HARF: Not about -- I said 78 million of that FMF request of 650 --

QUESTION: Oh, sorry, not -- sorry --

MS. HARF: Seventy-eight.

QUESTION: Of 650, sorry.

MS. HARF: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

QUESTION: All right.

MS. HARF: It's okay.

QUESTION: But anyway, that 78 --

MS. HARF: But that hasn't changed. Just to be clear, where the process is hasn't changed since these latest convictions. That's just where it's been. Nothing there has changed.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: But again, going forward, could this make it harder? Of course it could.

QUESTION: Well, so I just want to – I want to make sure – absolutely sure I understand this, and I'm sorry about that confusion.

MS. HARF: No, no, no, it's okay.

QUESTION: Seventy-eight --

MS. HARF: And I can see if I can get some more specifics.

QUESTION: Seventy-eight million and the Apaches have not yet been delivered.

MS. HARF: Correct.

QUESTION: And thus --

MS. HARF: Pending further discussions with Congress, which was the process that's been going on.

QUESTION: So those could, in theory, be – that could – that amount of money and the helicopters could be held back?

MS. HARF: I don't want to get into hypotheticals about how this could obviously make it harder. I mean, you could certainly – doing your own analysis, you could say that.

QUESTION: Right, no, no, but --

MS. HARF: But I am not saying that from here specifically.

QUESTION: I understand. But the argument has been made that you gave up all your leverage basically with the Egyptians. I'm not saying that you --

MS. HARF: Right.

QUESTION: -- this is true. I'm just saying that that's the argument that has been made. But in fact, just from this 572 million, there is still leverage that you have that you could apply.

MS. HARF: Absolutely. And we've said, look, we have a broad range of tools we use in terms of leverage with the Egyptian Government.

QUESTION: Is it correct that the Administration was opposed to the amendment that was defeated today on the Hill, in committee on the Hill, that would restructure the Egypt aid?

MS. HARF: Let me check. I'm not sure what our position was on that.

QUESTION: Marie --

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- you said that these trials were politically motivated. So you dismiss the Egyptian assertion that they're, in fact, not politically motivated and these guys were somehow involved in some subversive activities, right?

MS. HARF: Well, as we said yesterday in the Secretary's statement, I'm not sure how much clearer he could be that these are trials that departed from the norms of due process in a deeply disturbing setback to Egypt's transition. These are journalists doing their jobs, folks like you. There's no place in a democracy for these kinds of sentences and these kinds of convictions.

QUESTION: And in response to -- you didn't comment whether it was a slap or -- coming immediately almost after meeting with the Secretary of State, that these sentences and then the claim by the president that he had nothing to do with the judicial process -- you dismiss that as just not true, correct?

MS. HARF: Well, I'm not going to make a statement on what he said. What we have said is the Egyptian Government, all of it, all the way up to the top, should look at all available remedies, including pardons, to rectify the situation that's happened here.

QUESTION: Do you think President Sisi is posturing to get some political mileage out of it so he will end up pardoning these people? Is that what you want him to do?

MS. HARF: Well, I've clearly said that the government should consider pardons, right? So I've been very clear we think that should be an option on the table. I don't know why President Sisi says things or does things. I'm not in the business of doing analysis about what motivates him. But he made very clear to Secretary Kerry in Cairo that he was committed to certain principles that underlie in a democracy, so what we need to see now is actions backing up those words.

QUESTION: And finally, when the topic of these journalists came up in their discussion, what did Sisi say?

MS. HARF: Yes, and I did clarify that for folks after the briefing yesterday. Sorry about that.

QUESTION: Okay, and so please clarify that and see what -- what did Secretary say -- what did he promise the Secretary of State?

MS. HARF: I'm not going to speak for President al-Sisi. He can speak for himself. What the Secretary made clear was our deep concern with these kind of convictions, with these kinds of

sentences, with the arrests of journalists and people just looking to express themselves freely in Egypt. We've said that publicly and privately. And I think you could see from the Secretary's statement yesterday how seriously he took this issue, particularly coming on the heels of his visit there.

QUESTION: Same topic?

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: But at what point could you say with – regarding the Egyptian authorities and the latest on Al Jazeera journalists, at what time will we say the United States would change course and probably use all the tools it has?

MS. HARF: Well --

QUESTION: Because so far there has been – other than Al Jazeera, there have been hundred of others.

MS. HARF: Right.

QUESTION: And State Department always witness it, but we've not seen any concrete action to really change course.

MS. HARF: Well, I think if you look at our policy on Egypt starting last July 4th, there have been extraordinary changes in our policy at times. We went through a time when we suspended aid, when we did a full review of all of our assistance, when we started some back up after that review and then when we've moved forward with other pieces as well. So I just think it's not accurate to say that in the last year we haven't fundamentally reevaluated our relationship with Egypt. That process continues. It's ongoing and will continue in the coming days and weeks in response, quite frankly, to what the Egyptian Government does or doesn't do.

QUESTION: Were you surprised for the Al Jazeera for – as an example, did it surprise you that three professional reporters have been sentenced to such harsh --

MS. HARF: Well, look, a lot of what we've seen out of Egypt's judicial system over the past months has been horrific, including, as I said yesterday, the death sentences of, I think, 900 or more people, many in absentia. So unfortunately, this is the latest in a pattern of crackdowns on space for expression in Egypt. And again, the Secretary was very clear yesterday about our concern with this.

QUESTION: But there was – there will be a breaking point where we will see probably the United States just coming forward and probably trying to change course, events? Probably this is what the people in the area also are waiting for. Public opinions, I mean.

MS. HARF: Well, what we've said is we are constantly reevaluating our policy. And at the same time though – and I spoke about this yesterday a little bit – we do have a strategic

relationship with Egypt. It's a long relationship based on a number of shared interests that are in our national security. We believe it's important to continue that relationship and to continue engaging, that it's in our interest to do so. That hasn't changed. It's just finding the right balance and looking at all of our interests and how we can best promote all of them.

QUESTION: What is the Administration's policy on Egypt?

MS. HARF: As I – go ahead. No.

QUESTION: And how exactly – because I remember a year ago it wasn't that you had – that there was no policy on Egypt, basically, and you guys contorted --

MS. HARF: No, I think probably you just didn't like what our policy was.

QUESTION: No, no, it's not a question of me liking it or not. It's a question – I mean, I remember the contortions that you guys went into to try to avoid calling what happened a coup. So I'm just curious. You say that --

MS. HARF: One word does not make a policy, Matt. We were very clear about our --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: -- our strong concern about what happened last July 4th.

QUESTION: That's – you're right, one word does not make a policy. Perhaps you could – what is the policy?

MS. HARF: Look, Egypt remains an important strategic partner. We share a number of transnational threats, whether you look at terrorism, whether you look at weapons proliferation. It's a key player in the region, quite frankly, for a whole host of reasons – again, whether it's fighting the counterterrorism threat in Sinai, whether it's maintaining the peace treaty with Israel. We have a number of shared interests, so we believe it's important to maintain a relationship with Egypt. They play a key role in the Arab world as well, if we're looking at Middle East peace or other issues.

QUESTION: Those are --

MS. HARF: But that being said, when we have disagreements, we raise them, like we do with any country.

QUESTION: Right. But everything you just said are reasons to have a policy. They don't say what the – they don't actually describe what the policy is.

MS. HARF: That we will continue working with Egypt on these shared interests --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: -- like on counterterrorism --

QUESTION: And then --

MS. HARF: -- when it's in our national security interest to do so, at the same time making clear our deep disagreement with things like we've seen over the past few days.

QUESTION: And then why not be specific about what the cost will be to Egypt if they don't address your concerns?

MS. HARF: Again, we're constantly re-evaluating the policy, and if at some point we have more specifics, we're happy to share them. We're talking to the Egyptian Government. As you know, the Secretary spoke to the foreign minister right after he heard the sentences and the convictions, and we hope the Egyptian Government does the right thing here.

QUESTION: Has there been any more contact since then?

MS. HARF: No. Not since yesterday.

QUESTION: But all of the things that you said, Marie, sort of can be summed in one word in this relationship between the United States and Egypt, and that is security. Do you see anything other than security that really involves the United States in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Well, there's a lot wrapped up in security, Said.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: Obviously, the economic relationship plays into the security relationship, right, because we believe that Egypt, in order to give its people economic security and stability in the long term, needs to undertake certain reforms. We've worked with them very closely on that in part because it helps us do things like fight extremism and the terrorist threat. If people have other opportunities, it helps toward a shared security goal. So, so many of these issues are all wrapped up together. Human rights is a key interest that we have there as well.

QUESTION: Marie.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: What role do you think that the Egyptian president can play in the view of these verdicts?

MS. HARF: Well, without getting too specifically into the process, I know there is a judicial process in Egypt. We have made very clear that everyone in the Egyptian Government up to the highest levels need to consider all available remedies, including pardons. So I'm not going to do

a legal analysis of their judicial system, but we believe that there is way forward here where the Egyptian Government could do the right thing.

QUESTION: But do you think that the president has a role that he can play in the judicial system?

MS. HARF: The president is a – quite a powerful figure inside Egypt. Without getting into specifics, I think all members of the Egyptian Government should look to get the Egyptian Government’s decision to a better place here.

...

QUESTION: (Laughter.) But just based on what happened yesterday, and this is really addressing what we read coming from the Middle East public opinion. At what time and point when the United States dealing with Egypt would the United States say to the Egyptian authorities, “Enough is enough”?

MS. HARF: I don’t know what “enough is enough” means from a policy --

QUESTION: Of those --

MS. HARF: -- practical perspective.

QUESTION: Of those daily practices regarding human rights, without being specific on an issue.

MS. HARF: What does that mean? Look, I’ve said we’re continuously reevaluating our policy, and how we deal with the Egyptian Government and the kinds of assistance we give it. We’re constantly going through that process. We have been now for many months, indeed longer than that. So that process is ongoing and I think the Secretary was very clear yesterday in his strong condemnation of these sentences.

QUESTION: Sure, right.

MS. HARF: And I think they hopefully got the message and hopefully will do the right thing here.

June 23, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: ... I want to start with the one thing that you didn't mention, which is in Egypt.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: And the Secretary had some words about that.

MS. HARF: Yes, we also --

QUESTION: The White House --

MS. HARF: -- did release his statement on that as well.

QUESTION: The White House also has some -- I'm curious, though. Did the Secretary, in fact, raise these cases yesterday in -- raise this -- the case yesterday while he was in Egypt? And if he did, what did he say and how did the Egyptians respond?

MS. HARF: Well, a few points. I think the Secretary made very clear today our feelings on the case. As you know, this is a judicial process. But in his statement, he called on the Egyptian Government to review the political sentences and verdicts pronounced and consider all available remedies, including, of course, pardons. As he said today, immediately upon hearing about the sentences, he called the foreign minister of Egypt to express our deep concerns. Yesterday, the topic of course came up in the context of our concerns about human rights, rule of law, these kind of sentences and convictions of course. We know there's a judicial process here, but that's all put in place in the context of our larger concerns about human rights, and the Secretary made that very clear in his call today.

QUESTION: Right. But the human rights -- the most recent Human Rights Report says that Egyptian -- your human rights -- the State Department's Human Rights Report says that Egyptian courts are susceptible to government influence. And I'm just wondering if the Secretary made clear his concerns about this case yesterday in his discussions.

MS. HARF: We've made clear for months our concerns about this case.

QUESTION: Right, right. But I mean -- but most recently, before the --

MS. HARF: And I'll double check on the conversations yesterday.

QUESTION: -- before the -- right. But before the most -- before the verdict, the most recent communication with the Egyptians about this case was yesterday, right, with the Secretary?

MS. HARF: I will double check on that to see what the conversations looked like.

QUESTION: Well, I mean, I'm just wondering. I mean, it seems like if he did raise the case and express concerns about it, and given the fact that you guys do not believe that the Egyptian judiciary is free and independent of government influence, how is this anything other than just a slap in the face to you guys, particularly after you've given them – you went ahead and released additional assistance?

MS. HARF: Well, let me double check again on the level of detail of conversations yesterday. I know the issue was broadly broached in terms of human rights and convictions, but let me check on that from yesterday.

QUESTION: All right. Yeah.

QUESTION: But --

MS. HARF: But setting that aside – hold on, let me finish. Setting that aside, I think you saw from the Secretary's statement today very strong language about how this process lacked fundamental norms of due process, is a deeply disturbing setback to Egypt's transition. So I think he made very clear that injustices like this can't stand if Egypt has any chance of moving forward.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: That being said, we do have a strategic partnership with Egypt that we think is important, but we will be very clear when we have deep concerns about what they've done.

QUESTION: So does that mean that there is no consequence for this?

MS. HARF: Look, I think the Secretary made very clear our concerns about it, and we are constantly reevaluating our policy towards Egypt based on what they do. Look, and what we've said is we need to see steps taken moving forward and that as decisions are made by this government, we will evaluate them based on those decisions.

QUESTION: So there's no – but there isn't anything in the short term that you're aware of that you're going to do to express your displeasure, other than the statements that the Secretary made at the --

MS. HARF: Look, we're constantly reevaluating our policy, but to my knowledge, there's nothing specific that's being done today. But again, this all plays into the broader context of the space that we've seen, quite frankly, the shrinking space in Egypt for freedom of expression, for freedom of the press, which we've been very concerned about.

QUESTION: What is the status of the transfer of the 10 Apache helicopters that were supposed to go to the Egyptian military? Related to that, what is the overall status of the release of the \$575 million in FMF funding?

MS. HARF: The 572 I think is what you're referring to. So that was recently obligated, as folks know. It was the result of continuing consultations with Congress. Those consultations are ongoing. Obviously it wasn't timed to coincide with anything other than our consultations with Congress. No updates on the Apaches. We're still working with the Hill. As you know, money's obligated, but obviously we have to keep working with Congress to get things moving, so I don't have any update for you on that.

QUESTION: Would it be --

QUESTION: On the journalists, please.

QUESTION: Would it be too -- wouldn't it be reasonable to consider perhaps slowing down the process of transferring the delivery of the Apaches or of actually making the funds available to the Egyptians for their military operations to show the U.S.'s displeasure with the verdict?

MS. HARF: I think we were very clear about our displeasure with the verdict today. And as I said, we continually look at our policy towards Egypt and what our assistance will look like. There are many competing factors here. You heard the Secretary speak about them yesterday in his press avail. So we're -- again, we're constantly evaluating this, and we will make our displeasure known, as we did today.

QUESTION: Does the U.S. trust Egypt in light of these meetings which the Secretary had on Sunday? And he was rather voluble, to use a word, about his conversations with both President Sisi and with Foreign Minister Shoukry on Sunday. Does the U.S. feel that it can trust this new government?

MS. HARF: Look, it's not about trust, Roz. It's not about trust in any relationship. It's about actions and what we see happening. And I think the Secretary made very clear in his statement today our concern -- our deep concerns and how we view these sentences and these convictions. I think that came through crystal-clear today in his statement. Certainly, again, I think for him coming on the heels of his visit there, this was, I think, particularly tough news to take today. And we'll continue to make our displeasure known.

QUESTION: And one more --

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. HARF: Wait. She's been waiting.

QUESTION: -- and one more --

MS. HARF: One more on this.

QUESTION: Yeah. And then I'll yield to Lena.

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

QUESTION: Yes. (Laughter.) Would it be fair to say that the Egyptian Government is damaging its own credibility, not just with the American Government but with the international community, because President Sisi has promised a new start?

MS. HARF: Well, I think that, again, going back to what the Secretary said, these kind of sentences, these kind of convictions, fly in the face of everything that President Sisi told him yesterday that he wanted to govern – the way in which he wanted to govern. The Secretary said that today. I think that it's hard for people around the world to look at these sentences and these convictions and see that there's anything just about them, see that there's anything about them that is the kind of Egypt President al-Sisi has talked about going forward. So again, it's about action, it's not about words.

The Secretary had good meetings yesterday. These are important meetings. These are important discussions. We have a broad relationship with Egypt. But again, they've said they want – that they aspire to see their country advance in a certain way. Okay, we need to see actions back up those words. And again, we've called on the Egyptian Government to review the sentences, to look at potential avenues, including pardons, in this case.

Yes.

QUESTION: These journalists were brought into the court for more than 12 times. Each time they go there, their trial gets postponed. Only hours after Secretary Kerry meets with Sisi and the foreign minister – although you've said you've always expressed concern regarding the freedom of press and what's happening in Egypt, this verdict came only hours after the Secretary left the country. What do you make of this, the timing? It's --

MS. HARF: Well, I don't want to jump to any conclusions about the timing. As you know, there is a judicial process here. And as Matt mentioned, we have had concerns about the judicial process being politicized in the past. Certainly we've expressed that. I don't want to jump to conclusions about timing. Again, I think the Secretary made very clear that he had conversation yesterday with senior Egyptian leaders who talked about the kind of Egypt they want to build. Okay, this latest action, regardless of the timing or the reason, flies in the face of that. And it needs to not happen in the future, and we need – they need to take steps to remedy it.

QUESTION: Why are you still considering increasing aid to Egypt? Or – we understand that the aid that has been provided throughout the last year is the military aid that's necessary to guarantee the Camp David deal. And --

MS. HARF: Well, let's talk about – when we talk about counterterrorism --

QUESTION: You're talking about an act in Congress to increase the aid to Egypt --

MS. HARF: Well --

QUESTION: -- and approve that budget while you're just expressing concerns about all these major issues happening there.

MS. HARF: Again, we have shared interests when it comes to counterterrorism, particular in the Sinai. A lot of what we've provided in terms of assistance is for the counterterrorism fight in the Sinai, which also benefits the people of Egypt. Let's be clear about that.

Also assistance that doesn't go to the government, that benefits democracy programs in Egypt, that benefits average Egyptians trying to make their voices heard. So we have a broad, strategic relationship with Egypt. We will make very clear when they have done things that we disagree with. And I think all you have to do is look at the last year -- almost year now -- since July 4th and look at how our policy evolves in response to what the Egyptian Government itself has done. We've been very clear that we're willing to take steps in response to what they do.

QUESTION: Let me clarify again -- just again on the Apache question. You say that the delivery is still being reviewed, it's still in process. Can you specify exactly what the status of those helicopters is?

MS. HARF: I believe at this point in the process it's been obligated, but we're working with the Hill in terms of releasing funds and timing and all of that. I can check and see if there's more specifics, though, Roz.

QUESTION: Can I go to Iraq?

QUESTION: On Egypt, please.

QUESTION: Can I -- no, I want to follow up on Egypt. Is it fair to say that the U.S.-Egyptian relationship is of such strategic importance to the United States -- both because of the peace treaty with Israel, privileged access for the U.S. military to the Suez Canal, and of course, Egypt's status as the most populous Arab nation -- that it really doesn't ultimately matter in terms of consequences what Egypt does on human rights, that the United States will continue to maintain the relationship for those three fairly significant strategic regions -- reasons?

MS. HARF: I don't think those two things are mutually exclusive. I do not think that (a) we will maintain a relationship with Egypt. Even when we suspended our assistance, because of what happened last July, we maintained a relationship. It's really the nature of that relationship and the character of it and what it looks like. And that does change in response to the actions the government does or doesn't take. And that does include human rights.

QUESTION: And do you think it likely that the U.S. Government will suspend additional aid deliveries or reduce amounts of aid given to Egypt in response to this particular instance, or in response to the broader pattern of human rights abuses since July 4th?

MS. HARF: I wouldn't want to guess, Arshad. I know – we again, we constantly look at our policy. I have no updates on that front or nothing to predict in terms of what we may or may not do.

QUESTION: So the Secretary said when he was there yesterday that he was hopeful that the helicopters would arrive very soon. That suggests that the Administration believes that it is a good idea and that you're – for them to have the helicopters --

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- and that you are trying, working --

MS. HARF: With Congress.

QUESTION: -- with Congress – encouraging Congress to allow them to be transferred.

MS. HARF: Yes. That's my – it's my understanding our position on that has not changed.

QUESTION: Okay. So even after something as egregious as this and in the pattern – in fitting with the pattern that you say is horrible, you are still lobbying Congress to ramp up assistance to the Egyptian Government. Is that correct?

MS. HARF: Matt – well, take a step back, though.

QUESTION: But that's correct, isn't it?

MS. HARF: Our relationship – well, no. Let me --

QUESTION: No?

MS. HARF: Well, let me put it into context. Our relationship with Egypt is a complicated one and it's a broad one. And quite frankly, this is an egregious step. You saw the Secretary make a comment on it today. We've also seen egregious steps over the past few months, right, with the hundreds of people sentenced to death, in absentia most of them, without even having trials. There is a pattern here. We are working with the Egyptians to try and break it not that there's a new government in place, but again these things aren't mutually exclusive.

We can on the one hand express our displeasure, express our concern about human rights, and also say but there is, at times, a shared interest to provide some assistance. It's not black and white.

QUESTION: Well, yeah, I mean, I understand where you're – what you're saying. I don't – I'm not sure it makes --

MS. HARF: You just don't agree with it. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Well, I – I’m not sure – I just don’t think it makes any sense. This is a government that has been doing everything wrong in terms of one of your – allegedly, one of your top, highest priorities, which is the protection of human rights --

MS. HARF: Absolutely.

QUESTION: -- and instead of punishing them or taking some step to show your displeasure other than just saying angry words, you’re actually trying to get them more assistance.

MS. HARF: Well, we do believe --

QUESTION: I mean, you’re trying to reward them.

MS. HARF: No, this isn’t about a reward. This is about the fact that we have shared strategic interests, that the assistance we provide to them – all of that is done in service of those shared strategic interests. It’s all where the United States national security interests lie.

QUESTION: So national security --

MS. HARF: So they’re a competing national security interest. Human rights is one of them, counterterrorism – there are all these competing interests, and what we do in Egypt and everywhere else is balance those interests.

QUESTION: Okay. Well, why isn’t it then fair for someone to take a look at this and say, “Well, in the battle of competing national security interests, human rights loses?”

MS. HARF: Because I think that’s a very simplistic and black-and-white reading of the situation.

QUESTION: Well, but that’s what it is.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: That’s the – I mean that’s --

QUESTION: (Inaudible) be accurate.

MS. HARF: Again, I would fundamentally disagree with it. This is a complicated relationship, Matt. To be fair, over the past year we have changed our relationship with Egypt at times to a large extent, as you saw after July 4th.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: So I think we’ve been very clear that we’re willing to take steps. But you have to look at it from the broader perspective, what serves U.S. national security interests. And we do

believe at this time the – our interests are served by maintaining an assistance relationship with Egypt while also pressing on human rights, while making clear that if they don't take certain steps we will take further action.

QUESTION: Okay, but it's not as if since July 4th the bar graph has gone flat or down. If – you're – the U.S. assistance to Egypt after the initial penalties, since July 4th, has gone up.

MS. HARF: And we have. We suspended assistance for quite a bit. And it's – I'm not sure – let me double-check on that --

QUESTION: But as they --

MS. HARF: -- but it's my understanding this was all pre-obligated.

QUESTION: Right, right. Right.

MS. HARF: This wasn't we decided to do new things.

QUESTION: Well, I know, but --

MS. HARF: Right.

QUESTION: -- the assistance is going up to Egypt as they --

MS. HARF: Well, no. It's been steady, as we had --

QUESTION: It's flat-lined?

MS. HARF: Well, it's – again, there's no new assistance, right. It's just issues that we – or assistance that we have put on hold to look at after what happened last July 4th, and then moving forward with assistance as we deemed it in our security interests to do so.

QUESTION: Right. I guess I just don't understand what the – I mean, there seems to be no consequence at all here. I mean --

MS. HARF: Again, this is a broad relationship, Matt, and there are a variety of levers we have in terms of tools we can use to push the Egyptian Government.

QUESTION: Okay, what – sorry, so – and now – and one of those would be aid, right?

MS. HARF: One of them, but it's not the only one.

QUESTION: Okay, well --

MS. HARF: And I think you saw the Secretary very strongly come out and say – and I don't have any predictions for what might happen next. There's a process in place, we've called on the

Egyptian Government to review these sentences, we've called them to do things like considering pardons.

QUESTION: All right.

MS. HARF: I just don't have any more --

QUESTION: Is it your understanding that they're at least willing to consider those steps?

MS. HARF: I'm quite frankly -- am not sure. We would encourage them to, obviously.

QUESTION: What was the Secretary's understanding of the legal process once he finished his meeting with President Sisi? Did President Sisi spell out for him this is --

MS. HARF: In terms of this case?

QUESTION: In terms of this case and of --

MS. HARF: Let me check and --

QUESTION: -- yeah.

MS. HARF: -- see if this case specifically came up in their meeting.

QUESTION: Yeah --

MS. HARF: I'm not sure that it did.

QUESTION: -- because --

MS. HARF: I'm happy -- obviously, the broader issue came up of convictions and sentences and detentions.

QUESTION: And I'm asking because I'm wondering --

QUESTION: It didn't come up in --

MS. HARF: I said I'm not sure. I'm going to check, Arshad.

QUESTION: Yeah, yeah, because I --

QUESTION: Okay, no, no. I thought you had told Matt that it did come up earlier.

MS. HARF: I said I know the issue generally came up yesterday, but let me check what meetings. He had a number of meetings and I just need to check.

QUESTION: I'm asking in the context of the Secretary's statement and his comments at the press avail suggesting look at all venues available to you --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- including pardons. And I'm wondering, did it come out of that conversation? Was that briefing that the Secretary might have had just about the judicial process?

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check, guys, about what more happened on the ground, what meetings it came up in specifically, if any. I know again the broad issue came up, but I just want to get some facts from the team that's been on the ground. As you know, they've been working on Iraq today as well, so let me just see what I can get you.

Let's just do one more on this.

QUESTION: One more on Egypt. Okay, well, actually it's about Al Azouli prison. It seems like the Egyptian Government has this hidden prison where they torture the disappeared individuals. They are hundreds of them. There were -- there was -- they're being subjected to torture. It's a military jail called Al Azouli. Do you have anything on this?

MS. HARF: I don't have any specifics. I'm happy to check with our team and see if we have anything.

June 20, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Related to the Secretary Kerry trip to the Middle East and Europe, I mean, it was reported today in Egyptian – some of the newspapers that Secretary Kerry may go to Egypt on Sunday. Is it something expected or it's just a rumor?

MS. PSAKI: I just don't have any trip details beyond those I announced to announce at this point in time.

QUESTION: So the other question related to the trip: When the Secretary yesterday mentioned he was going to meet the Gulf states people, is he going to meet – to meet them in Paris or where?

MS. PSAKI: He'll be meeting, I think --

QUESTION: Or in Amman?

MS. PSAKI: -- a range of officials in Paris at the end of the week.

QUESTION: And so it's – Amman is just for Judeh?

MS. PSAKI: And as more details of his trip become available, we'll make those available as well.

June 18, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt/Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Jen, I wondered if I could ask a question about Libya. Are you aware that some 40 Egyptian workers – oil workers – have been kidnapped in Libya? And some are tying it to the apprehension of Ahmed Abu Khatallah.

MS. PSAKI: I have not seen those reports, Said. I'm happy to look into them.

June 16, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egyptian
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: The Egyptians – Egyptian authorities have decided to – or have released one of these Al Jazeera journalists who was being held. Do you have anything on that?

MS. PSAKI: I had not seen that. Did it just happen? We'd certainly welcome that. As you know, this is an issue that we've been raising at the highest levels. We've been very concerned about the crackdown on freedom of speech and media, and certainly specifically these journalists who have been held, but --

QUESTION: Well, it's not all of them.

MS. PSAKI: Just one. So let me check on that. But certainly there are more who are being held that we would continue to have concerns about.

...

QUESTION: Yes, Madam, thank you. Any update on Madam Nisha Biswal's visit and talks in Delhi with the new Indian officials?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything new to update beyond the readouts we provided last week.

QUESTION: Quick one?

MS. PSAKI: Sure, go ahead, Lucas.

QUESTION: There are reports in Iraq on the Iraqi Government suspending Twitter, Facebook, – maybe Instagram, I'm not sure – but all the social media.

MS. PSAKI: We have seen reports that the Government of Iraq has taken steps to block access to a wide range of social media in the country. While we understand Iraqi concerns about the spread of terrorist activity-related messaging on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter, we're strongly urging the Iraqi Government to continue to allow Iraqi citizens access to these sites.

June 17, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Matt had raised the question yesterday of my colleague from Arabic, Abdullah al-Shami. Is there more that you're prepared to say about these apparent – his apparent good news?

MS. PSAKI: Well, thank you for your question, Roz. We understand that the prosecutor has decided to release Al Jazeera journalist Abdullah al-Shami for health reasons. We obviously would welcome that development. However, at this time, we cannot confirm that he has physically been released, and there are others who remain in detention. As we've said, we remain deeply concerned about the restrictions of freedom of expression in Egypt, including the targeting of Egyptian foreign journalists simply for doing their jobs. Journalists, regardless of affiliation, should be protected and permitted to do their jobs free from intimidation, free from – or free – fear of retribution, and we continue to convey our deep concerns directly to the Government of Egypt and are watching the Al Jazeera trial very closely.

QUESTION: Can you say with any more specificity at what level has this message been communicated not just about my colleagues, but also for the hundreds of Egyptian journalists and bloggers who have found themselves behind bars just for trying to exercise their constitutional rights?

MS. PSAKI: Well, when the Secretary speaks with his Egyptian counterparts, he often raises concerns about these issues, but certainly the highest level on the ground in Egypt it's raised.

QUESTION: Has this building seen any improvement in the overall human rights situation in Egypt since Mr. Sisi was formally inaugurated as president?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I don't want to give a grade or a ranking, Roz, but we have continued concerns, as we've expressed, and think there's more that can be done on freedom of media, freedom of speech, freedom for protesters.

QUESTION: I just wanted to check one thing. You said journalists, regardless of their affiliation, should be able to do their business? That's correct?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: I just want to make sure that applies outside of Egypt as well. That applies everywhere around the world, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Including the Associated Press, even. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: No, I'm talking about physical locations. That would apply universally. The United States believes that this should be everywhere, not just in Egypt, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Yes.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: (Inaudible.)

QUESTION: That's not a trick question.

MS. PSAKI: No. I --

QUESTION: I don't know why you'd think I would --

MS. PSAKI: Well, you never know with you. (Laughter.)

June 12, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

The United States is deeply troubled by the harsh prison sentence issued yesterday against 25 Egyptian activists for organizing an authorized protest. The defendants were sentenced to 15 years in prison under Egypt's highly restrictive demonstrations law, following very irregular court proceedings. This marks at least the third court verdict in the last six months sentencing peaceful protestors to prison under the new demonstration law. We urge Egypt's new leadership to make good on its promise of inclusivity and impartiality, consistent with its promise to protect the rights of all Egyptians and govern for all Egyptians.

Since last November, the implementation of Egypt's restrictive demonstrations law has led to a sharp increase in arrests, detentions, and charges against opposition figures, human rights activists, and peaceful demonstrators, and verdicts based on these charges, all of which send a chilling message to the civil society at large. These verdicts do not contribute to a transition process that protects the rights of all Egyptians.

June 11, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Does the United States have a view on the new assembly law and its use in the sentencing of 25, including Alaa Abdel Fattah, for their participation in what they say was a peaceful demonstration?

MS. PSAKI: We share the view of Egyptian civil society representatives that this law, which imposes restrictions on Egypt's ability to assemble peacefully and express their views, does not meet international standards and will not move Egypt's democratic transition forward. And as is the case in any of these circumstances, we have – we will continue to express that to the relevant officials in Egypt.

...

QUESTION: I think Ambassador Shannon finishes his meetings with (inaudible) team with him for two days. Do you have any readout of these talks with Egyptian officials?

MS. PSAKI: They're still on the ground now. Ambassador Shannon – who's also the State Department Counselor – as well as Ambassador David Thorne, have been meeting with Egyptian government officials to discuss opportunities for cooperation to reform and reignite growth in the Egyptian economy. They had meetings with a range of Egyptian officials yesterday and today, and I'll be able to provide you a more expansive list of that probably by tomorrow.

QUESTION: So the second **QUESTION:** Yesterday, David Satterfield was in Egypt and he met foreign minister. I think David Satterfield now is a special envoy for Libya, or if that's his title, I am not sure. But because they were discussing – with Foreign Minister Fahmy they discussed Libya. Do you have any readout of this meeting?

MS. PSAKI: I do not. I am happy to check and see if there's more we can share. And Ambassador Satterfield has remained in his position that is outside the U.S. Government, but he has been assisting and advising on Libya. And as I noted yesterday, we expect the Secretary will speak with Foreign Minister Fahmy soon in the coming days.

June 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: That's the next on my list of long things here. I wondered if you'd heard or seen a video of a woman who was sexually assaulted in Tahrir Square during the inauguration of the new president at the weekend and whether you had any reaction to it, and again, what this shows about the sort of level of the safety for the environment of people in Egypt at the moment.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. We have seen the horrific video which shocked and appalled us as much as it did the Egyptian people. The prevalence of sexual assaults against Egyptian women is a cause of great concern not just to the Egyptian people but to the United States and the international community. We note President al-Sisi's message on sexual harassment that came out today, but we urge the government to make good on its promise to do whatever it takes to combat sexual harassment and implement the new law that punishes convicted harassers. We also urge all serious efforts to end sexual violence in Egypt – which is, of course, different – and to ensure that there is no impunity for attacks against women.

...

QUESTION: -- Egypt. Fifteen, I think, or thirteen Syrian opposition members or members from the Syrian opposition imprisoned today in Egypt because they were demonstrating against President Assad. Do you have anything on this?

MS. PSAKI: In Egypt they were arrested?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: I haven't seen the specifics of that, Michel. Obviously, as you know, we have concerns about what's happening with the judicial system in Egypt. We make those concerns known. I will note also that Ambassador David Thorne and Counselor Tom Shannon will be having meetings with senior Egyptian officials that start today and will resume tomorrow. This visit will bring – will build upon Ambassador Thorne and Counselor Shannon's last visit to Cairo in April, as well as their earlier visits to the UAE, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait. The continuing – this continuing engagement is indicative of the importance we place on U.S.-Egypt relations. And obviously as a part of their discussions, they will make known or make clear – again, as we do on many occasions – the additional steps that the Egyptian Government must take in order to proceed on a path to a political transition.

QUESTION: Has there been any telephone conversations between the Secretary of State and President Sisi since his election?

MS. PSAKI: No, there have not.

QUESTION: There have not. Or anyone, like, maybe --

MS. PSAKI: I will --

QUESTION: -- a foreign minister?

MS. PSAKI: -- tell you his appropriate counterpart, of course, is the foreign minister. He is planning to speak with his -- with Foreign Minister Fahmy very soon. I think they're working to schedule that call.

QUESTION: Okay. I know this is probably a question that should be addressed to the White House, but do we have any idea when the President is going to speak with Sisi?

MS. PSAKI: I would refer you to them for details on that, Said.

June 9, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Any assessment for President Sisi's speech yesterday?

MS. HARF: I don't think I have any assessment on that.

QUESTION: Why? You didn't see it?

MS. HARF: Because I don't think I'm going to do analysis on his speech. If there's something specific you'd like to ask me about it, but --

QUESTION: It's his political plan for the next six years regarding internal and international affairs.

MS. HARF: Look, as we've said -- and you know we had some folks on the ground there -- we look forward to working with him. There are a whole range of issues we work with Egypt on. There's a lot of work he has to do in moving this transition forward. We will make that clear, as we have. And Ambassador Shannon and Special Advisor Thorne are there for the inauguration and are having meetings with a range of Egyptian officials as well.

QUESTION: Is there anything encouraging --

QUESTION: What is the readout --

MS. HARF: I'm sorry?

QUESTION: Go ahead.

QUESTION: Is there anything encouraging you heard from the speech?

MS. HARF: Well, I'm not going to parse it. I think what we're focused on we've made very clear what needs to happen next in Egypt. There needs to be more space for dissent. There needs to be an end to the politicized detentions and politicized sentences that we've seen against people in huge numbers, right -- over 1,000. We know that Egypt has a great amount of work to do in terms of their democratic transition, and that's what we're focused on. We're also focused on economic issues. There's a member of the Department of Treasury with them on this delegation to talk to them about economic reform and how they can improve their economy as well.

QUESTION: You mentioned the --

QUESTION: Marie, yesterday President Sisi said that whereas he wants to work towards reconciliation, there'll be no leniency for those who have blood on their hands and for those who resort to violence. Does that fit in with your general theme of working towards sort of political reconciliation and ending the – and accepting that there might be opposition and dissent to his government?

MS. HARF: I think we will have to see how he governs, quite frankly. I think that words are important, but actions are more important. And we've made very clear, particularly leading up to some certifications we'll have to be making, what Egypt needs to do to move down this democratic path further than they already have. So I think that's probably all the analysis I'm going to do on it.

QUESTION: What's your timeline for the certifications?

MS. HARF: We don't have a timeline.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: So yes, please. I mean, you mentioned Counselor Tom Shannon is there and he met officials. Did you have any readout of --

MS. HARF: Not yet. Let me touch base with them and see if we can – I know the meetings have been ongoing. Let me see what I can get for you.

QUESTION: So and then – I can understand your concern, but there is a question. Before you used to express this – that you want to engage.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

QUESTION: So is this engagement or wait-and-see situation now?

MS. HARF: Well, I think it's certainly engagement. We engage with the Egyptian Government and different parties in Egypt all the time. But we also do want to see how Mr. al-Sisi will govern once in office, and I think we will judge the government by their actions and make our decisions accordingly.

QUESTION: The other question is regarding this – already IMF and World Bank are expressing their readiness to cooperate with the new reality in Egypt. Do you have any concern about that or are you going to object it?

MS. HARF: No. I mean, we've said very clearly that Egypt has to make some tough economic reform decisions and that they should do so because that's best for their economy. And we would certainly welcome other people helping that – with that as well.

QUESTION: Relating to these economic challenges that Egypt face, it is well known that already Gulf countries are participating. Are you in touch with them to channel this funding, or it's like it's up to them to do what they want to do?

MS. HARF: Well, each country obviously can make its own decisions about its own money. We are in touch with partners in the region about Egypt's economic future, among a host of other issues as well, and we'll continue talking to them. We've always said that an influx of cash is not enough, that Egypt must undertake some serious economic reforms with their – in terms of their economic system to really be able to give the Egyptian people the kind of future economically that they need. So cash is good; reforms are much better.

QUESTION: There is another question related to your engagement in Egypt, in particular regarding the funding of NGOs and democratic process or reforms. I mean, you are already holding it, in the same time asking for democratization. How you can explain to me this dilemma?

MS. HARF: Well, I believe – and I would have to go back and check my very large pack of Egypt guidance from when we talked about assistance. I do believe that some of our assistance that goes to NGOs and nongovernmental organizations that promote things like democratization is still moving forward. So I can double-check, but it's my understanding that the funding that does go to some of those things does continue.

QUESTION: Has Secretary Kerry been in contact with his counterpart over the weekend in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Let me check. He has not.

QUESTION: And President Obama – he hasn't called General Sisi, has he?

MS. HARF: No. And the call – as we've said, the President's obviously been traveling. White House will have more details on timing, but should be happening soon.

QUESTION: Because President Obama did call President Morsi back when he won the election, correct?

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. And President – I would assume so. I don't remember. But the President will call him. Again, we look forward to working with him, and sometimes schedules just make these things tough to get people on the phone.

QUESTION: I have a question regarding the area – region. Can I ask? Or – it's Egypt.

MS. HARF: Go ahead, yeah.

QUESTION: Thank you. Today's – Anne Patterson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs, she is in Doha for the U.S.-Islamic Forum.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. A long-planned conference.

QUESTION: Yeah, long-planned conference. Does she have – I mean, did she have any meetings with officials in Qatar? And did they discuss the issue of Taliban?

MS. HARF: So I actually had just gotten a note from her before I came down here. I believe that she did and that they did on the margins of the conference. But let me double-check on that, and I can actually send a note around to folks. I apologize that I didn't print that out right before I walked here.

QUESTION: Do you have what are the topics they discussed?

MS. HARF: Let me double-check. Obviously, that was not the purpose in any way of her visit, but I do believe it came up, so let me just double-check on that. I apologize for that; I should've had that in front of me.

June 5, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

[T]he United States looks forward to working with President-elect al-Sisi in Egypt and his government to advance our strategic partnership and many shared interests. The U.S. delegation to the Egyptian presidential inauguration will be headed by the State Department Counselor Thomas Shannon on behalf of President Obama. Counselor Shannon and Senior Advisor to the Secretary David Thorne will be part of this delegation that also will include the Department of Treasury to Cairo, again, for the inauguration.

...

QUESTION: Okay. I just have two questions on Egypt. Now, you are welcoming the new elected president --

MS. HARF: I said we look forward to working with.

QUESTION: Which is good. Does that mean – is it fair to say that you are satisfied with the implementation of the roadmap after the constitution and the presidential election and the coming parliamentary election? Are you satisfied that Egypt is taking the steps towards democracy?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't think I'd use the word "satisfied." I think there's more work to do. And we do look forward to working with the new government. We believe Egypt needs to continue its transition towards a stable, inclusive, and civilian-led democracy. We've seen that with the elections, but that's only part of it. Democracy is about more than just a ballot box. It's about how you govern, it's about how inclusive you are, so we're going to be looking for all of those things going forward in terms how this new government behaves.

...

QUESTION: So regarding the delegations going to attend the ceremony, it's Counselor Shannon and David Thorne. Both of them were involved before in discussions with --

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: -- the Egyptian Government and Gulf countries to put a package. Is this going to be part of their visit too, or --

MS. HARF: Well, it does build on their last visit to Egypt, which was in Cairo in April. And you're right that both of them have been very involved in working with the Egyptians on the transition and also with countries in the region. I believe they may be traveling some other places

as well. So they've been very involved. That's why we believed it was important for them to attend the inauguration.

QUESTION: They are representing --

MS. HARF: President Obama. They are representing President Obama and the entire United States Government.

QUESTION: And the other question is related to the possibilities -- I know it's -- Congress is not in session, but probably they are having talks. I asked this question yesterday regarding the aid or the different aids.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Anything to update about that?

MS. HARF: We -- you asked about the Apaches yesterday, correct?

QUESTION: Apache, yes. I got the answer.

MS. HARF: Okay, good.

QUESTION: They're still in the storage.

MS. HARF: They're still in the storage, but they will be going. They're just still in storage.

QUESTION: I mean, but no. I mean, it's not going. There are talks going on --

MS. HARF: Right.

QUESTION: -- to send them.

MS. HARF: Exactly, exactly.

QUESTION: That's a big difference.

MS. HARF: Thank you for being more precise than I was. (Laughter.) There -- it's been a long week.

There's no timeline for when we have to make additional decisions about the assistance we haven't yet certified for Egypt. As I've said, those discussions continue. We will make those decisions based on the behavior of the Egyptian Government going forward.

Yeah.

QUESTION: Just to clarify, the other bits of the military assistance that were frozen in October – the Abraham tank parts, the Harpoon missiles – those remain frozen still?

MS. HARF: That is my understanding.

QUESTION: There's no decision yet on whether to release --

MS. HARF: Let me double-check with my colleagues, but that's my understanding.

...

QUESTION: The language in Obama's speech – Obama's, like, statement about – the President's statement about Egypt wasn't very enthusiastic about his winning. There was like no – not like the Ukrainian. There was, like, no more – like, congratulations or welcome.

MS. HARF: Very different elections, yes.

QUESTION: Yeah. And I understand that, but would you consider the election that took place in Egypt like a democracy? Because he already banned the Muslim Brotherhood from participating in the election. So I don't know if you consider that a democracy.

MS. HARF: Well, we think – well – and then you can get another one, I promise.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

MS. HARF: We think that there is still a path to go here for Egypt on its democratic transition. We have been very clear about our concerns about the crackdown on freedom of expression, on the press. We've talked in here about journalists who are still in jail. We've talked in here about the hundreds and hundreds of people sentenced to death for things that look sheerly political. So we have been very clear with our concerns about the democratic transition here, and Egypt has a long way to go. But there's an opportunity now to turn the page here.

QUESTION: The other question is about an American citizen journalist who – not journalist – well, an American citizen who has been shot and kept in custody in Egypt for as long – well, more than hundred days. And he has been like – no, he's been in a hunger strike on hundred – more than hundred days. And the United States, like, obviously aren't doing anything – isn't doing, like, anything about him.

MS. HARF: Do you have the name? I just want to make sure --

QUESTION: Mohamed Soltan.

MS. HARF: Yeah, we're talking about the same person.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: We have been providing consular services to Mr. Soltan, including monitoring his health, pressing Egyptian authorities to ensure he has access to appropriate care, and maintaining regular access. We arranged for him to be seen by an outside physician to assess his condition, are closely monitoring his case. We're in contact with his family and with his legal team to inform them about recent developments, and obviously continue to raise this case with Egyptian officials at the highest levels.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

MS. HARF: You are very welcome. And we last met with him, I believe, on May 5th, and attended his hearing on May 11th.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

MS. HARF: You're welcome.

QUESTION: Can I follow-up with Egypt again?

MS. HARF: You can.

QUESTION: Thank you. On the statement of the White House on June 24th, 2014, after the election – the presidential election, which President Mohamed Morsy won in that election --

MS. HARF: June – you said 2014.

QUESTION: Sorry, 2012. Sorry.

MS. HARF: It's okay. I knew what you were talking about.

QUESTION: I'm quoting here. That's the statement that came out of the White House: The United States congratulates Dr. Mohamed Morsy on his victory in Egypt presidential election. And we congratulate the Egyptian people for this milestone in their transition to democracy. Here – do you consider this 2012 election more democratic than 2014 election?

MS. HARF: It's a good question. I'm not going to do a comparison about levels of democracy. I think each election's different and each period in time is different, and we write statements based on what we see happening on the ground. And as we said here, there's still a lot of work to do in terms of Egypt's democratic transition.

QUESTION: But my colleague does raise an interesting point.

MS. HARF: Yes. That sometimes we use different words for things.

QUESTION: Well, but that's a warmer statement for President Morsy --

MS. HARF: You can draw whatever conclusions --

QUESTION: -- than the statement that was issued this week for President Sisi.

MS. HARF: I think you can draw whatever conclusions you'd like from the difference in the statements. We also very clearly spoke out when President Morsy governed in a way that we believed was not democratic, as you saw over many months, and then of course after the events of last July 4th.

QUESTION: So was it perhaps premature to welcome or congratulate President Morsy on his win?

MS. HARF: No, I think that each statement is made at a time in history and facts on the ground change, and that's just what it is.

QUESTION: I have just one – I have a question on the delegation that will attend the inauguration of elect-President Sisi. Does it in any way reflect – the level of the delegation – does it in any way reflect your concerns over the situation in Egypt?

MS. HARF: No, I mean, Ambassador Shannon is a very senior State Department official – senior advisor to the Secretary. It's who we're sending.

QUESTION: But it's not the Secretary.

MS. HARF: He's not. You're right. He is not the Secretary. Factual statement.

QUESTION: Thank you very much.

QUESTION: Are there any plans for the Secretary to visit Egypt in the coming --

MS. HARF: Not to my knowledge, no.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: Let's do two more and then we're bringing us home.

QUESTION: A small question. Yesterday, Secretary wrote an op-ed in FT, I think, on asking – urging the Congress to increase the visa for the Afghans?

MS. HARF: Yes. Yes.

QUESTION: Do you know how many visas you need? Do you have a number for that?

MS. HARF: So we know how many we have now, but we know that it won't be enough if we continue – actually, because we've been quite successful at processing visas. We've made a great deal of improvements for folks from Afghanistan. I know there's different bills in Congress and there's some potential numbers there. I'd refer you to whoever's introducing those bills. I know

Senator Shaheen on the Senate side and some folks on the House side. But the bottom line is we want more, and we --

QUESTION: What do you need? Do you have a --

MS. HART: I can look and see if there's a number. I think we've probably like as many as we can get. But we do need some more. So I can see if there's some numbers.

June 4, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Last August, I think you announced from here that Egypt will not be invited to the Africa summit that the President is going to host. Now the White House called – said that the President will call the new president in Egypt to congratulate him.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm, in the coming --

QUESTION: Will this lead to a change in your position that President Sisi will be invited to Washington?

MS. HARF: I'm sure everyone saw the White House statement at 2:00 a.m. (Laughter.) This is the problem when people are overseas.

On the AU summit, I don't have any update for you on that. I think I'll refer you to the AU mostly, but we'll see if there's any update. I don't know – I'm not aware of a change in position.

QUESTION: So you still keep the same position that --

MS. HARF: I'm not aware of a change, but I'm happy to check. You did see the White House statement, which was that we look forward to walking – to working, not walking with – working with Mr. al-Sisi. President will be calling him, plans to speak with him in the coming days.

...

QUESTION: I mean, it was mentioned in the statement, and of course this was raised here in the – on the podium from the strategic relation and – but still, it was – it seems that the Obama Administration are holding up the Apache helicopters to Egypt. I mean, do you have anything to say about that? It was announced April 23rd that 10 helicopters are going to be – to help in the anti-terror activities in Sinai specifically.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. I'm happy to check on the timing. I'm not aware of the timing on those.

QUESTION: I mean, timing – I mean, you mean if it's done or not?

MS. HARF: I don't know the details on that. Let me check.

QUESTION: It was reported, according to some reports here, that somebody from – a State Department official confirmed that the aircraft are in storage at the Fort Hood.

MS. HARF: I'm happy to check. That's my understanding. That was the latest I knew, but I'm happy to check if there is an update.

QUESTION: And what's the process to release them? I mean, it's – with the Congress, you mean?

MS. HARF: Uh-huh. Again, I'm not – let me --

QUESTION: You don't – okay.

MS. HARF: Let me get the details for you.

QUESTION: Okay, yes.

MS. HARF: I have --

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. HARF: Yeah. I mean, let me --

QUESTION: (Off-mike.)

MS. HARF: Let me check on where the process is and where it goes from here with Congress on the Apaches. It's a good question. Let me get some more info.

...

QUESTION: Does the – your – the White House statement was actually pretty neutral in its tone, I thought, yesterday.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: It wasn't very congratulatory, just that you're looking forward to working with them.

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: Are you now in a position to go forward with your certification on – that Egypt's on its road to democracy and release the rest of the money that was frozen last year?

MS. HARF: So on that, no announcements to make. We never laid down a timeline for when or under what circumstances the Secretary would make that kind of determination. I know that the discussions are ongoing. It's still an internal process; don't want to get ahead of it.

QUESTION: So you still have concerns about democracy-building in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Well, I mean, broadly speaking we – and you saw in the statement, obviously said that we had concerns raised by observation groups, we shared them, about the political environment, the restrictions on people around the elections. So I think we'll continue having the discussions.

...

QUESTION: And it was announced yesterday that – Sunday, I think it will be the swearing-in ceremony. And almost they said that countries are invited and they name the United States. What level – are you going to participate in it? And what level it's going to be?

MS. HARF: We're still determining who will be part of the delegation, and when we have an update I'm happy to provide that. It may be later today or early tomorrow.

June 3, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: The – as you know, presidential elections were certified this afternoon.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: With a 47 percent turnout, do you think that this can be legitimately called a landslide for President al-Sisi?

MS. HARF: We have seen the official announcement of the results and we'll have something – I think a response from the U.S. Government very soon. Don't have it quite yet, but we'll have something for you today. Don't have any announcements to make on the results yet.

QUESTION: Why?

QUESTION: Can we go to --

MS. HARF: It'll come very soon. We're still working through it.

QUESTION: Just going --

QUESTION: Well, it's 97 percent, and we've known about the unofficial results of these elections for a week now, almost a week now.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. We'll have something to say very soon. I just don't have – believe me, I pressed to get it before this, and this is how the policy process works, and we'll have something very soon.

QUESTION: Can we go to --

QUESTION: Will it be something that surprises us or --

QUESTION: Will it be bigger than a breadbox?

MS. HARF: I have no idea what response any of you will have to anything we say. No. We'll – it'll be coming very soon. I don't have anything to preview for you on that.

May 30, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I realize that this is probably a fool's errand to get you to try and comment on the Egyptian election, but I'm going to try anyway.

MS. PSAKI: Okay. It's a Friday afternoon. Let's have some fun. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Yeah. Have you come to any determination about the – about what you think about the election?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I mentioned yesterday, we're waiting for the official announcement of the results by the presidential electoral commission of Egypt, which we understand will happen next week. So we will wait for that. We have clearly expressed our concerns about the electoral environment in the lead-up to the election and are looking at all reports about the electoral process during the election. I know some – there have been a range of reports that have been out about that, and we've expressed concerns about those throughout the process.

QUESTION: Right. Well, the Egyptian Government is highlighting several of the – several reports, or at least one report that says – that's quite complimentary, that says that things were orderly and that it was, in fact, free and fair. You're not prepared to endorse the findings of that? I mean, they put it out in a statement.

MS. PSAKI: I understand that. We will speak to the election when the official results are announced. But we stand by the concerns we've had about the lack of inclusivity, crackdown on media freedom --

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: -- protestors, et cetera.

QUESTION: But in terms of the actual conduct on election day, you are still going – you're still reserving judgment, or you have a judgment and you just don't want to announce what it is until the results are in?

MS. PSAKI: We'll wait to speak to it until the results are in.

QUESTION: So will you say – like, once the results are out, will you say to General Sisi, "Congratulations on a convincing victory"? Is that it?

MS. PSAKI: Said, you'll have to come back next week and see what happens.

QUESTION: No, I mean – but don't you have an idea already that – it's like something, 95 percent of the vote went to General Sisi?

MS. PSAKI: We often don't issue an official statement until the official results are made.

QUESTION: But even – can you – yeah, Michel is correct. President Putin has called to congratulate President-elect --

QUESTION: Sisi.

QUESTION: -- Sisi. Are you concerned at all, one, that the Russians are maybe getting ahead of you here, because it's clear that he is the winner – that he is the victor regardless of whatever determination you make on the conduct of the election – that the Russians may be getting a foot in early?

MS. PSAKI: No, we are not. We have a --

QUESTION: No? All right.

MS. PSAKI: -- strong relationship, a long, enduring relationship with Egypt, and we remain in touch with a range of officials and that will continue.

QUESTION: And --

QUESTION: So as a general rule – sorry, can I ask on this?

QUESTION: Yeah.

QUESTION: As a general rule, do you think it's a good idea to arbitrarily extend elections? Like in 2000, would it have been a good idea for the U.S. Government to have extended the 2000 election for --

QUESTION: Only in Florida.

QUESTION: -- for a day or two? Is that a good idea, as a general --

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to make a sweeping point on that. I appreciate the opportunity.

QUESTION: Well, how about this: I mean – or I guess it's understandable, or I guess it's arguable that it's a good thing to wait until the official results are in. But does it – is it not at all a concern of yours that the second-place finisher in this was invalid ballots? I mean, that the opposition candidate came in third behind spoiled ballots?

MS. PSAKI: We've --

QUESTION: Does that not raise any --

MS. PSAKI: We've been clear, as I referenced the lack of inclusivity, the crackdown on media – all the issues we've talked about in the lead-up. We'll have more to say when the official results are announced.

QUESTION: Right. But you don't have it that – you can't even speak to something like that, which is a fact, that the opposition candidate finished behind – percentage-wise, behind the spoiled ballots?

MS. PSAKI: I am aware of the results. We will have a comment when the official results are named.

May 29, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yes, Egypt. What do you make of the elections and the results we have so far as semi-formal?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we're waiting for the official results, official announcement of the results, which we often do and is pretty standard. As we've said before, we don't want to get ahead of the process. We remain concerned more broadly about the continued restrictive political environment leading up to the election and its implications for inclusivity and stability in Egypt, including politicized arrests and limits on freedom of the press. Democracy is more than elections, and we will continue to press for progress on all of those areas.

QUESTION: They extended their elections for one extra day. I mean, how do you look at this? Because they – apparently, they wanted to increase the turnout of the elections which really was weak the first two days. I mean, is this a normal thing to do?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any political analysis of their steps they've taken in that regard specifically. Our concerns remain the ones that I just outlined.

QUESTION: Would that – with this extension and so on, sort of how would you respond to that in terms of when it comes time to saying this election was fine, up to international standards, and so on?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, we'll wait for --

QUESTION: Would that in any way compromise your position?

MS. PSAKI: Said, we'll wait for – let me finish. We'll wait for the results to be officially announced, and then we'll have a comment on the results.

QUESTION: But thus far, do you feel that the elections were conducted, let's say, in a nonviolent atmosphere or no intimidation atmosphere?

MS. PSAKI: Again, we'll wait to do analysis until the results are announced. And as I mentioned, we still have remaining concerns about additional steps that need to be taken.

QUESTION: But the campaigns have already talked about – this one won with a 93 or a 94 percent, and that when only 4 percent --

MS. PSAKI: I understand. I mean, we've seen the same stories.

QUESTION: -- and the fraud votes were --

MS. PSAKI: We've seen the same reports, obviously, but we'll wait for the official results to be announced.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) against him conceded defeat, too.

QUESTION: Yes, he has conceded.

QUESTION: So, I mean --

MS. PSAKI: We'll wait for the official results to be announced.

QUESTION: Are you still sort of sticking your head in the sand that Sisi is not going to emerge as the --

MS. PSAKI: We'll look forward to talking about that when the official results are announced.

QUESTION: Are you promising that you will have an analysis for us once the official results --

MS. PSAKI: I'm not making any promises, but I --

QUESTION: Well, you just said you would wait until -- you said you would wait until the official results came out before giving your analysis.

MS. PSAKI: Let me put it this way --

QUESTION: So --

MS. PSAKI: -- we'll look forward to a robust discussion in this very briefing room when --

QUESTION: And I just want to make --

MS. PSAKI: -- there are official results announced.

QUESTION: And I just want to make sure that I got this right: You're not going to comment on things unrelated to the result, i.e. the conduct of the election, until -- also until the official results are announced?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. And obviously, I also expressed concern about some of the lead-up to the elections; concerns we have about inclusivity, media freedoms -- those remain, and we still have those leading up to the elections as well.

QUESTION: Are you concerned about the low turnout, which was less than the previous election for -- when Morsi was elected?

MS. PSAKI: Well, without doing political analysis, I will say that our view is that they also need to keep in mind – the new officials – that democracy is more than elections, and there are a number of steps they need to – they’ll need to take when things --

QUESTION: But if the turnout was only 47 percent, and given that he may have won by 96 percent according to state television – but we’ll go along with the game of waiting for the official results – then does that give him a credibility? Does that give him legitimacy as the leader of all of Egypt?

MS. PSAKI: We will wait until the official results are announced.

...

QUESTION: So during the election process, a lot of Egyptians were complaining that they were asked – they were told that if they do not end vote on the third day, 500 Egyptian pounds will be taken out of their paychecks. I mean – and this is not only 10 or 50 Egyptians. This is what thousands of Egyptians are saying on Twitter. Just put hashtag Egypt and you will see all this.

What do you make of this? This is a way of intimidation, because the turnout the first two days were apparently not more than 20 percent, the semi-official – and then all of a sudden we are hearing numbers in 40s and 47 percent and all this. What do you make of all this, I mean, watching from a distance?

MS. PSAKI: Broadly speaking, we’d be concerned about any reports of intimidation, and we are certainly concerned about reports of lack of inclusivity, of a crackdown on media that has been ongoing.

QUESTION: I wanted to ask just to follow up on --

QUESTION: Wait, wait, wait. Specifically on this, there are countries in the world that you regard as democracies where voting is required and not voting is punishable by being fined. I can think of a large one. It’s an island. It’s also a continent. If you say you have concerns with this in Egypt, are you concerned about --

MS. PSAKI: I just said “broadly speaking,” but we don’t have any confirmation of that. I understand that there are reports out there on Twitter, but we’ll wait until we have the final results.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: I just wanted to ask about your relationship with Egypt. The fact that the President yesterday only mentioned Egypt in passing and really reduced the whole relationship to a security arrangement, does that indicate that your relationship with Egypt at the present time is probably at its lowest point since the signing of the Camp David Accord?

MS. PSAKI: No, it does not. It was a 30-minute or 40-minute speech. It did not talk about every issue we work on in the world, because it would've been five hours and the West Point Cadets may've been ready to celebrate their graduation at that point. So I wouldn't analyze how many lines or words as to meaning of the importance.

QUESTION: Only five hours?

QUESTION: Do you agree with the President that it is only a security arrangement?

MS. PSAKI: Three hours?

QUESTION: No, no, I think it'd have been longer.

MS. PSAKI: Go ahead (inaudible).

QUESTION: Do you agree with the President that it's basically a security arrangement and nothing else?

MS. PSAKI: I think we've been pretty clear we have an extensive relationship. We want to work with Egypt over the long term.

May 27, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: Okay. I wonder if you could comment on the elections, although it's been extended for one more day. And I'm sure you would probably want to wait until the results are out, but so far, do you have any comment on the conduct of the elections so far, the fact that it's been very low turnout? Does that in any way diminish the outcome?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we are waiting, as you noted in your question, for the conclusion of the Egyptian presidential elections, as well as the official announcement of the results. We're also waiting for preliminary assistance by international observers on the ground, and so we're not going to get ahead of the process.

QUESTION: Okay. But you're not concerned that there's been such a low turnout and --

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to speculate on that.

QUESTION: -- certain disenchantment with the --

MS. PSAKI: We'll wait for international observers and the elections commission to speak to that before we make any assessment from here.

May 23, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: First, what are the – your main concern regarding the process of the Egyptian elections?

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Second, do you have any concern about what expectation from the outcome? And third, you think that the outcome or whatever is coming out of this election is going to change or will help to change the reality on the ground in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Well, we don't know what the outcome will be, to be fair. And we don't support, as I've said a number of times today, any one party or any one person or any one group. We've urged the government to make sure the elections are fair and transparent. We have noted over many months now the shrinking space for dialogue, for peaceful protest, for freedom of the press. So we've certainly noted that the environment right now hasn't been as open as it should be. And what we've said consistently is that Egypt needs a different path forward, that they need to keep going down a path, that they need to embark on a path going forward that is more open, is more transparent, adheres to certain democratic principles, judicial principles, doesn't lock people up just for expressing dissent.

So we certainly think there needs to be a different future, absolutely.

QUESTION: So --

MS. HARF: And we'll take a look at what happens in the election and make a statement after – on what happened.

QUESTION: So now you are in status of wait and see?

MS. HARF: Well, we've certainly been engaged with the different parties in Egypt to encourage a fair and transparent election, and I think we're going to have some monitors – observers there as well. So we'll see what happens, and then make assessments about what happened. I don't have any predictions.

May 22, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I'm wondering about the reports of an Egyptian teen – he's 17 – who traveled to the U.S. for an engineering fair. He is now reportedly seeking asylum in the United States. And I was wondering if the State Department had any contact with him, his legal representation, or the Egyptian Government.

MS. PSAKI: It would be the Department of Homeland Security, if that's what he's seeking. I've seen those reports as well. So that wouldn't be under our purview here.

QUESTION: Just speaking generally, I mean, what does it say about the state of the Egyptian Government that this 17-year-old is fearful of further prosecution if he goes home?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think we've clearly stated our concerns about what's been happening with the judicial system in Egypt in a range of cases, hundreds who have been sentenced to death, and we've made no secret of that. I don't want to venture to analyze based on the reports of one individual what that means, because we've made no secret of our concerns in the past.

...

QUESTION: I just have one question about Egypt. Since they talked about, like – there's this Egyptian – sorry, an American citizen who's held in prison in Egypt. His name is Mohamed Soltan. And he's been on hunger strike, like, for over 100 days now. And have you tried to contact the Egyptian authority about his release? I mean reports saying that he's in a very, very bad medical condition.

MS. PSAKI: Well, in any case where a U.S. citizen is detained, we would use all appropriate consular services. I don't have any specific update on this case, but I can talk to our team and we can get one to you.

QUESTION: Can you take that for me?

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: Do you know if that gentleman is a U.S. citizen?

MS. PSAKI: I said broadly speaking, any U.S. citizen --

QUESTION: So you cannot reveal whether that person in Egypt is a U.S. citizen?

MS. PSAKI: I'm happy to get you a copy of the Privacy Act law. It may be useful to you, it seems.

QUESTION: I just wanted – you're not certifying that he's a U.S. citizen, the man in Egypt?

MS. PSAKI: I'm just informing you of how this process works, and what – we're happy to get you the documents if you need to educate yourself on how it goes.

QUESTION: Okay.

May 21, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have any comment on the outcome of the trial for Hosni Mubarak and his sons?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. We have seen the reports. We're awaiting details of the specific ruling so I don't have much to add at this point in time. I'm sure we'll continue discussing this issue.

QUESTION: The State Department often comments on what it sees as the constitutionality or basic fairness of legal proceedings overseas.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And I wonder if the conduct of the Mubarak trial to date, absent your receipt of final details on the verdict, meets, to the eyes of the State Department, the basic standards of fairness.

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything new to add today. As you know, we've expressed concerns in the past, not just about this case but about a range of court rulings in Egypt. And it's one of the issues that we continue to press Egyptian officials when we have discussions with them.

QUESTION: The Egyptian elections are upcoming, and by all accounts it looks as though former General al-Sisi will likely be the winner. I'm not asking you to get engaged in the business of predicting elections, but this is a bit unusual as a circumstance, simply because he has served as the de facto ruler of Egypt since last July, at which time or shortly thereafter the United States suspended its deliveries of some weapons systems, as was well publicized.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Is it presently the intention of the Obama Administration to resume those deliveries?

MS. PSAKI: The – so which specific piece, because there are so many different components of this? As you know, we just announced the certifications a couple of weeks ago. The other certifications, which I think is what you're referring to, James, are related to Egypt taking steps to support a democratic transition. We're continuing to evaluate those. Obviously, we're not yet able to or we would be announcing it, to certify that Egypt is taking steps to support a democratic transition given the concerns about freedom of assembly, expression, press, and association, which we have spoken about frequently. So it's not just about having an election. There are a number of other steps that we would require Egypt to take in order to make those certifications.

QUESTION: What has been the highest-ranking contact between the two governments lately that you can cite?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Secretary Kerry has actually had a couple of conversations with Foreign Minister Fahmy over the last couple of days about Libya, and I would point you to Secretary Hagel and his team about his conversations with al-Sisi in the past months. But Kerry – Secretary Kerry is in close contact with his counterpart.

QUESTION: From everything you've seen, does it appear that al-Sisi is poised to take the kind of political and economic reforms that the United States has been encouraging?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you know, we're not predicting the outcome of an election, James. But certainly, we will continue to press these issues and encourage a new government to take these steps, but I'm not going to make a prediction about what steps they will or will not take. We have consistently been calling for these steps.

May 15, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt, via telephone
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: No, that was pretty good. Thanks, Marie. One issue you guys have talked about in terms of expressing concern is the freedom of press as it relates to Egypt. As we're following the detention of our colleagues, and particularly one of them today, Abdullah Eishamy, he transferred from one facility, which he was denied bail and still has no formal charges against him. So my question is: To what extent are you concerned about his health, his trial, or that of other journalists in Egypt? And how are you conveying your views to Egyptian authorities? Thank you.

MS. HARF: It's a good question and just a few points. I will check on his specific case. I'm not aware of sort of the details of the health issues or anything like that you asked about, so I can check on that. I just don't have those in front of me.

In terms of how we convey our concerns, look, we very publicly have made known our concerns with the space for freedom of expression in Egypt. And that includes things like detention of journalists. We've made that very clear publicly and we've made it very clear privately as well.

So we will continue raising those concerns, and they're concerns that are really set against a broader climate that we have been concerned about, including these massive death sentences for people that – are political in nature. By any standard you could say that. And the continued detention, arrests, of journalists just trying to tell the world the story of what's happening in Egypt. So we will continue making our opposition to this known.

And I would say that as we continue to evaluate our relationship with Egypt, we've talked about the certifications and the assistance and how that's going to look going forward – all of this will play into that, right. And we've been very clear with the Egyptians about that as well.

May 8, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: This morning Secretary Kerry was meeting Amr Moussa.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Of course, you defined him as a former Arab League director, but he's a advisor job to the candidate or the presidency. What – do you have a readout of the meeting?

MS. PSAKI: Let me see if I can get you a little more of a readout, but let – obviously they, as you stated, did have a meeting this morning. They have a long-standing relationship. This most recent meeting was an opportunity to discuss a range of bilateral and regional issues, including Egypt's ongoing transition. But we will talk with our team and see if we can get a few more details from the meeting.

QUESTION: Yes, the other question, related. Two days ago, General Sisi was on TV and in an interview. Of course, he's a candidate now, but probably will be the president. He was asked about the future of Muslim Brotherhood and he said it's finished. Do you have anything to say about that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we continue to encourage an inclusive political process that respects the fundamental human rights of all Egyptians. Ultimately, we believe a transition – not just a presidential election but a broad transition to an inclusive and sustainable democracy – needs to respect freedoms, permit dissent, and foster an inclusive political process, and that is necessary to supporting Egypt's long-term stability and success.

So democracy is more than a vote at a ballot box, and we'll certainly be watching it with that in mind. IT's about equal rights and protection of universal freedoms of speech, assembly, and press, rule of law, accountability, and of course, inclusivity.

QUESTION: Yes, in the same interview, when you ask about the Egyptian-American relations, he mentioned that sometimes you are looking to things going on in the States with American eyes, and we hope that American officials look to what something happening in Egypt with Egyptian eyes. Do you agree with this categorization of looking to things different way?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think certainly we look at things – some issues, like freedom of speech and rights of public discourse and assembly, through universal eyes throughout – across the world, and those are some of the areas where we've expressed concerns. But we, as you know, value our long-term relationship with Egypt and have made some – taken some steps in recent weeks in that regard.

QUESTION: Amr Moussa, when he was moving around in this town, many places he mentioned the idea of – or the description of Egyptian-American relations that there is now a new page in it. But first, what do you think if – I mean, I ask him what he means by new page, but I'm trying to figure out if you see there is a new page or it's the same old page.

MS. PSAKI: Well, I would ask him, but certainly Egypt is going through an important transition, as they have been for several years. We know democracy and the transition to a long-term, sustainable democracy takes time. And obviously, we've expressed concerns where we have them, but we continue to value our long-term strategic relationship, and so we're continuing to work closely with them in that regard.

QUESTION: Yeah. There is another one, which is the last question, I hope.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: (Laughter.) Or you hope.

MS. PSAKI: (Laughter.) Go ahead.

QUESTION: It's related to the – your counter – Egyptian counterpart, the spokesperson of the foreign ministry. I usually use the same the same experience – expression “counterpart.”

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: So he was mentioning yesterday that the Egyptian foreign ministry, let's say, approved the name of a new ambassador and probably soon will be announced from the White House or anything. Do you have the new ambassador to Egypt – and some of already Reuters and others, they already put his name. Do you have anything to say or I have to say you are going to say to me wait for the White House?

MS. PSAKI: That is right. You know this job well. The White House makes any of those announcements, so I would defer to them. I have nothing to announce today.

QUESTION: Jen?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Both Amr Moussa, and before him Foreign Minister Fahmy, came to Washington and they said we want democracy, we are working for a new democratic government; but at the same time, they were very defensive over the criticism of the rule of law, the recent detentions of journalists, of the death sentences for hundreds of people. And they insist that this is part of their law, but it's never going to stand. I mean, these – especially the death sentences were never going to stand.

I'm just wondering: Do you all buy that? I mean, it seems like they want to have it both ways; this is a democratic government and we have these laws, but don't pay any attention to these laws because they'll never stand.

MS. PSAKI: Well, our view, Lara, is that to build a prosperous, democratic future, Egypt needs to respect fundamental freedoms and universal human rights. And those include many of the issues you've mentioned, whether that's rule of law or respect for media freedom, respect for assembly. And again, we will circle back on the Amr Moussa meeting, but from the Fahmy meeting, those are issues that the Secretary pressed when he was in the meeting because there are not really different definitions of what those are. And we have raised concerns about them in the past. As you know, there are additional certifications that will require steps, additional steps by the Egyptian Government. And not only do we press it, we'll be watching what they do moving forward.

QUESTION: So basically, your position is that it's the law, the letter of the law, that needs to be either respected or changed, right? I mean, it doesn't really matter if there's these excuses or this justification that some of these things will never stand. It's fair to assume that the U.S. has problems with the letter of the law as they're written, correct?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the extrajudicial – the practices that are happening on the ground, I mean, we could outline them for some time about the arrests and the sentencing and how journalists are being treated, how protestors are being treated. So regardless of what is conveyed, I mean, our view is fairly universal on some of these issues, and we believe they need to do more in order to continue on the path to a democratic transition.

QUESTION: Do you think that would include changing some of these laws?

MS. PSAKI: I – not that I – I might have to talk to our team about whether that's what we're calling for. But obviously, abiding by respect for a range of these practices may not even require a law; it's about how you respect human rights and freedom of speech.

QUESTION: Yeah. I mean, the way that they explained it, especially when it comes to the sentencing, is that this is what the judges are legally required to do because some of the defendants weren't there in court, and blah, blah, blah. And so, I mean, it raises, I think, a fundamental question over, if you support democracy, how can you support these laws?

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are some laws we've spoken about, like the NGO law, for example, where we've expressed concern about it, and obviously, we don't feel it should stand. I'll check and see if there are others that we can reference.

May 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: The Foreign Minister was here last week; there have been Egyptian officials around. And their message, in terms of American concerns about democracy, seems to be essentially we're going to be holding elections and then we have a brand new constitution and we're – our parliament will change laws according to that.

Did you – have you been telling – giving them any specific pointers – not pointers, but like requirements that they would have to meet in order to satisfy American concerns? Like, if they hold a free and fair election they get a – or, I mean, have they --

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely. I mean, it's not just about – democracy is not just about having an election, right? It is about governing with democratic ideals, which allow for freedom of speech, freedom of protest, freedom of expression, and we have had concerns, as you know, about all of those issues, but also issues of inclusivity and allowing for civil society groups and international NGOs to play a role in these efforts. So I would say there's a range of steps that certainly we've continued to encourage the Egyptian Government to take, and those are all steps that the Secretary outlined in his meeting last week as well.

QUESTION: And just to follow up on that, the – one of the arguments they gave for the kind of excessive security crackdown – and we're not talking about the Muslim Brotherhood and that here, because they go on to sort of terrorism stuff there – but in terms of the demonstrators and so on, they said this is a transitional period. We've been facing extra chaos, extra terrorism, whatever, so that's why the excess is needed. Do you think there's any credibility in that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, obviously we're familiar with the security situation in Egypt, and as you know we've taken steps to help the Egyptians bolster their own security against the growth of extremism, et cetera, which we announced just a couple of weeks ago. But that doesn't justify the steps that we've seen, whether it's a crackdown on freedom of media or protesters or on NGOs or all of the issues that we've regularly raised concerns about.

...

QUESTION: Senator Leahy, chairman of Foreign Relations, put a hold on some of the aid that had been previously designated for the Egyptian Government. Has this building been able to persuade him to release the hold?

MS. PSAKI: I think you would know if that were the case. Obviously, we continue to consult with member of Congress – members of Congress, including Senator Leahy, but I don't have an additional update in that regard.

April 29, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Can you give us a readout about the Secretary's meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Fahmy?

MS. PSAKI: Sure, sure. Well, as you all know, Secretary Kerry met this morning with Foreign Minister Fahmy. During that meeting, he expressed strong support for Egypt's success and our strategic relationship, and reiterated our continued commitment to working together to counter terrorism, weapons proliferation, and to maintain – and to efforts to maintain regional stability and including peace with Israel.

But he also made clear that while our work with Egypt is vital to our national security interests, the United States is deeply disturbed by the announcements about arrests, sentencing, and also about the crackdown on the April 6th group. He made clear that those steps are inconsistent with Egypt's pursuit of a lasting democracy. These actions represent a setback and make it more challenging to move forward. More needs to be done by the government on human rights, political inclusion, and economic reform, and further – in order to – further release of holds on military equipment depends on greater progress.

He also talked about the Al Jazeera journalists – pressed for their release – who have been detained, as well as a range of individuals who have been detained. And he made clear that we – they must change the course on human rights. More needs to be done on reform efforts.

QUESTION: So this is what the Secretary told him. What came out from the meeting? I mean, did they agree on certain issues or any future path forward?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you know, rarely in an hour are you able to agree to significant issues, but he --

QUESTION: Nine months.

MS. PSAKI: -- he made very clear what our concerns are: That we still continue to support, we will support our strategic relationship with Egypt, but these recent announcements and events are of great concern.

QUESTION: Do you have any comment about Senator Leahy's remarks on the floor today that he will not allow the – even the initial stuff that was certified to move ahead?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you know, we're in the congressional notification process phase, and over the coming days, we'll be continuing briefings with a range of senators, including, of course, Senator Leahy.

QUESTION: So he hasn't been – he has not been briefed on this yet?

MS. PSAKI: Well, he certainly --

QUESTION: Because it sounds as though he was notified and said no to notification.

MS. PSAKI: No, I did not mean to imply that. What I mean is this is the phase we're in. As you know, the reason we were able to grant these certifications because it was allowed for in the appropriations bill. But Congress certainly has a powerful role to play in determining whether this funding moves forward.

QUESTION: I know. Okay. But you don't have any specific -- I mean, he says that it's not -- that he's not going to allow it, and -- until they make some progress on the democracy front, even though this is not the -- this is not the stuff coming from the democracy certification. So you don't think that that's misplaced concern, or --

MS. PSAKI: All I will convey here is that we will be briefing members of Congress, we'll be in close consultation, we'll be hearing their concerns.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. PSAKI: Obviously, we have expressed our own.

QUESTION: The Administration's position, then, is that you still want to go ahead with this -- that's not the right word, but first tranche of certified aid?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Can you say -- could you flesh out a little bit more what he raised about the case of the Al-Jazeera journalist when he was speaking to them, about the minister? What was -- what did he -- when he raised the case, what were his --

MS. PSAKI: He raised the fact that they've been detained, that we believe in freedom of speech and the ability of the media to do their jobs, that they should be released.

QUESTION: Yes, please. The same issue. I assume they already raised the issue of the Egyptian court mass decision to -- mass trial of the people.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: The Secretary or the Foreign Minister Fahmy explained something? It was satisfying, the -- his explanation? Because yesterday he was saying about -- that it's a court decision, that it depends on the court, and other factors. It seems that there is -- it's not a matter of the attitude. It's more than explanation, I mean. Do you have anything to say about that?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the government is -- may be operating with an independent judiciary, but the notion that their hands are tied, in our view, is not credible, it's not satisfactory, and it doesn't

justify the steps that have been taken. And all of these factors are taken into account as we look forward.

QUESTION: The other issue was raised yesterday when he was – the foreign minister is talking, and probably it was raised because there are some concerns he is – about what the foreign minister is calling this – like to diversify the relation with others, which means including, of course, Western Europeans and Russia in particular, which is like somehow annoying some people here. Do you – are you concerned about Egypt relation with Russia regarding political or military cooperation or other things?

MS. PSAKI: We're not.

QUESTION: Okay. The third question – I think there is another one related to. Tonight you are going to – the Secretary is heading to Africa and Ethiopia in particular. And in the recent weeks and months, there is a big issue of the Nile water issue in – between Egypt and Ethiopia.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Are you asks – or are you ready or prepared to play a role in – I mean, like, narrowing the gap of differences between Ethiopia and Egypt? Or what is your attitude towards?

MS. PSAKI: Let me talk to our team. We'll obviously be doing a briefing for the press traveling on the trip on a range of issues, and we'll see if that's one of the topics discussed.

April 28, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Egypt. After the Egyptian court's decisions today regarding Muslim Brotherhoods and the April 6th movement, and your statements and the White House statements – how do you expect the meeting between Secretary Kerry and Foreign Minister Fahmy tomorrow to be?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I noted last week, Foreign Minister Fahmy is in town for a variety of meetings, and he'll be meeting, as I understand it, with other senior administration officials as well as members of Congress. And during their meeting, I certainly expect the Secretary will – it's an opportunity to have face-to-face diplomacy. He'll certainly talk about our ongoing commitment to a long-term relationship with Egypt, but also raise concerns about recent events, including those you mentioned that were in our statement, whether it's the announcement over the weekend about the banning of the April 6th youth movement or it's the preliminary death sentences handed down to 683 defendants by an Egyptian court. So those are issues, as you can see by the strength of the statement we put out, the White House statement that was put out, that we remain concerned about.

QUESTION: Do you read anything about the timing of these sentences, and – since Foreign Minister Fahmy is in town?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have any analysis of that. I know his trip has been long planned.

QUESTION: How about not analysis of it, but what do you think it says when this kind of a thing happens – and this is the second time there've been a very large number of people sentenced to death in one – I was going to say one fell swoop, but that's probably a bad expression – at one time. This is the second mass death sentencing, and it happens just a couple days after the Secretary called Foreign Minister Fahmy and said, hey, we're going to certify you as – now, I realize that the certifications that were announced last week don't cover the human rights portions of the legislation. But is this the kind of thing that would impact your decision on whether to certify Egypt is meeting the other legislative requirements for the aid?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Matt, these – you're right, and let me just reiterate for everybody that the certifications that we did – we announced last week, were related to meeting specific requirements as it related to security in the Sinai and needs there, and as it related to a security cooperative relationship with the United States.

However, the remaining certifications are related to Egypt's ability to continue to take steps toward a formal democracy. And obviously, steps like these are – these mass trials and rulings are unconscionable. These actions will further add to instability, extremism, and radicalization. And these are issues that, while the Egyptian Government has pledged to resolve, clearly, they don't represent the kind of democratic ideals and progress that we need to see made in Egypt.

QUESTION: So this is the kind of thing that will weigh on your judgment on whether to certify or not on the human rights issues?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we obviously look at a range of circumstances on the ground.

QUESTION: Right, I understand. But this – and this is – but this is one of them. This kind of thing would be one of them that you look at?

MS. PSAKI: These are the types of factors we look at.

QUESTION: While we're on Egypt --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- do you still think Egyptian military can restore the democracy as once Mr. Secretary stated?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we obviously – these are the types of issues the interim government has pledged to resolve. We urge the government to demonstrate, through actions rather than words, its support for the universal human rights and democratic, accountable governance that the Egyptian people continue to demand. So there are more steps they need to take. We'll be watching closely, and I'm certain that will be a part of the conversation not just tomorrow, but in our ongoing engagement with Egypt.

QUESTION: By the way, Minister Fahmy just said – just now, as a matter of fact – that all NGOs need to have a license to operate. Do you have any comment on that?

MS. PSAKI: We've certainly – I haven't – I don't believe I've seen actually his specific statements, Said. We've expressed concern in the past about restrictions on NGOs. I'm not specific with which – what this would put in place. I'm happy to check with our team and see if there's more we can spell out on that, but obviously restrictions on NGOs that provide much-needed services to the Egyptian people would be of concern to us.

...

QUESTION: (Inaudible) agency. You just said that – your statement said that the prosecution of those, like, 800 – no, 683--

MS. PSAKI: 683. Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and the 137, is going to increase instability and radicalism in the – in Egypt, right? So this mean they – there is more security concern for the United States in this issue, like, to keep prosecuting like the Muslim Brotherhood or Morsy supporters or whoever. So – but you still, like, release, like, the 10 Apache helicopter. I mean, does not – how do you keep, like, urging Egypt, like, to deal with the human rights situation, but at the same time, oh, we have

security concerns that we have to take care? Is not like – doesn't this, like, sound like kind of contradict to what you keep saying?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the specific decision on the Apaches was made because Egypt faces a significant and growing threat from extremist groups, particularly in the Sinai, and in the past several months, has used Apache helicopters as a component of its counterterrorism operations in the Sinai. And so we believe these new helicopters will help the Egyptian Government counter extremists who threaten U.S., Egyptian, and Israeli security. This is one component of a broader counterterrorism strategy. At the same time, as is evident by the statements we've issued and the comments I've made, we still do express concerns about whether it's human rights issues, due process, steps needed to take – that Egypt needs to take towards democracy when warranted, and certainly these cases warrant those statements.

...

QUESTION: You said that the reasoning behind the approval of the Apaches was in part to help them combat extremism?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And in your response to this massive court ruling, the death – the mass court ruling, you said that this encourages extremism, right? This kind of --

MS. PSAKI: Yes, but let's remember I was talking about use of Apaches in the Sinai and our counterterrorism cooperative actions.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: And obviously, actions that don't promote democracy or are contrary to democratic processes certainly promote unrest.

QUESTION: Right, but I mean if – the court case in Cairo is not just going to affect extremism or influence extremism in Cairo. It – there are people who live in the Sinai who will be affected by it.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So how do you make – how can you make the case that your two policies here, your human rights policy and then your strategic policy on one hand, aren't operating at cross-purposes? If the government is doing one – on one hand doing things that encourage and promote extremism --

MS. PSAKI: Which we condemned.

QUESTION: -- and you're having – and then you're having to give them Apache helicopters to fight extremism, that – do you see the problem there?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think in all points here we are working to combat extremism, whether it's working with the government on military counterterrorism operations or encouraging them to take steps that do not promote unrest within their country.

QUESTION: So – all right. So the government then – the government takes steps that encourage extremism and you give them helicopters to go kill the extremists. Is that the --

MS. PSAKI: I think it's a little more complicated than that, Matt, but --

QUESTION: Okay, well, it sounds like a good deal for whoever makes Apache helicopters.

April 25, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

**Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: Egypt. Resuming – after resuming the delivery of 10 Apache helicopters, next Tuesday the Foreign Minister of Egypt Nabil Fahmy is going to visit Washington and the State Department as well. So is this like a turning point in the U.S. position toward Egypt? Especially that the Apache helicopters freeze was designed to pressure the army into more democracy. So it seems like there is more democracy right now?

MS. PSAKI: I wouldn't agree with that. The Apache helicopters – I spoke about this a little bit the other day, but just to reiterate, as you know, Egypt faces significant and growing threats from extremist groups, particularly in the Sinai, and in the past several months has used Apache helicopters as a significant component of its counterterrorism operations in the Sinai. So we believe these new helicopters will help the Egyptian Government counter extremists, which is also, of course, a step that helps the United States, Egypt, as well as Israel.

This trip that Foreign Minister Fahmy is taking is completely unrelated to the certifications from this week. It's been long planned. I'd point you to them on the specific timing. And while he's here, he'll see Secretary Kerry on Tuesday as well as other senior Administration officials and members of Congress.

So as you know, Egypt is an important strategic partner for the United States. We remain committed to a strong relationship. We have many common interests. That doesn't change the fact that there are still steps, as we've noted a number of times, they need to take in terms of their democratic transition. And I'm sure that will be a part of the conversation as well.

QUESTION: Jen, can I just follow up on that?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: I mean, the – do you feel – sorry. There's been a lot of criticism about the decision to release a partial amount of the funding that you suspended back in October. Human rights groups are saying that it sends a mixed message. I understand that you're saying that the part that you're releasing relates to strategic and counterterrorism operations, for instance, as well as your relationship with Israel, and that you're withholding some part of the money still because you don't believe that they've gone far enough down the path to democracy. But I think, too, some organizations say this is sending a mixed message that you're slapping them a little bit down, yet six months later you're going ahead with the funding and it really doesn't have any consequences.

MS. PSAKI: I would disagree with that. One, we remain concerned about steps that Egypt has taken in recent months that have been against democratic principles, such as media freedom, freedom of speech, freedom of individuals to protest, the political arrests. And we have voiced those as we've had them, which, unfortunately, has been on a fairly regular basis.

However, as mandated by the Appropriations Act, Egypt did meet the specific requirements that you just mentioned, and that is why we are granting – we certified the 1(a) and 1(b). We didn't certify 6(a) and 6(b) – they have different requirements for them – because those requirements are much more linked to those concerns you have exactly expressed.

QUESTION: But do you feel that you've lost some of your leverage now by going ahead with – depending on how your maths goes, but a third to half of the amount of money that you froze?

MS. PSAKI: No. Look, I think we made this decision to abide by law but also to, because of the concerns we've had – they've met the requirement as laid out in the law. And again, we still have existing concerns about steps they need to take as it relates to democracy, and we'll continue to press them to do that.

...

QUESTION: Yes, please. First of all, you mentioned 1(a), 1(b) and then 6(a) whatever, 6(b). Are – the certification process is like done on these different items, or it's a whole general certification?

MS. PSAKI: How does 1(a) – are you asking me how is 1(a) and 1(b) different --

QUESTION: I mean, like when you say the --

MS. PSAKI: -- from 6(a) and 6(b)? Or --

QUESTION: Yeah, I know what is different, but it's if the certification is taking place, it's taking place for all items or just separately certify this item, certify then these items?

MS. PSAKI: What's included in the 6(a) and 6(b) – or 1(a) and 1(b) you're asking?

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: Well, 1(a) and 1(b) certifications allow us to move forward with FY2014 assistance to the government for limited purposes, including continuing payments to maintain current FMF contracts, but we would only deliver items – any items funded for accepted categories. And the accepted categories are counterterrorism, border security, and nonproliferation. Also, there's a separate pool of ESF funding for economic assistance, including in the areas of education and economic growth.

So 6(a) and 6(b) certifications, which we have not done, would allow us to deliver those other items and assistance that does not fall in those accepted categories, including contracts that aren't existing, as an example.

QUESTION: So but just to clarify this point, yesterday or day before yesterday – yesterday there was a press statement released by you --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and the day before yesterday there was a question raised here regarding the 650.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So this 650 related to the 1(a) or 1(b) or something like that?

MS. PSAKI: To 1(a) and 1(b), yes.

QUESTION: And then the question is: What is the timeline of this thing? I mean, it's like this thing is -- now certification is done so it has to be approved by the Congress now?

MS. PSAKI: The next step is congressional notification, and that's the next step in the process.

April 23, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Yes. Yesterday you released a readout of the phone call between Secretary Kerry and Nabil Fahmy, the foreign minister of Egypt. And a few hours later, it was announced that 10 Apache helicopters would be released. And accordingly, some people said it's to resume the aid to Egypt and some people say it's partially resuming the aid. It's – do you have any clarification about this?

MS. PSAKI: Sure, let me try to outline it a little more clearly. So as was noted in the readout we gave, there are two certifications that we have confirmed – certifications required by Congress through the Appropriations Act that this – we have confirmed they are abiding by. One of those is sustaining the strategic relationship with the United States. The other is upholding its obligations under the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty.

So as a result of that, this – these certifications announced, as part of our readout, allow us to use FY 2014 assistance for limited purposes to – prior to certification related to Egypt taking steps to govern democratically, which obviously they still need to take, and those are separate certifications.

So these limited – through these limited purposes, we can now use FY 2014 funds for continuing payments to maintain current FMF contracts, as well – and also to deliver any items funded with FY 2014 FMF for accepted categories, including counterterrorism, border security, and nonproliferation. So it opens up the ability to use additional FMF FY 2014 funding through these two certifications. And again, that is – that was – as is laid out in the appropriations act.

QUESTION: Do you have a (inaudible) for what gets (inaudible)?

QUESTION: So can I --

MS. PSAKI: I do. Sorry, go ahead. Do you have another question?

QUESTION: So – I mean, yeah. I mean, the question is like – to understand this. So the certification is one package or three components differently, separately?

MS. PSAKI: There were two certifications.

QUESTION: Yes, which is the one, the – strategic and the second is bounding with the --

MS. PSAKI: Correct. The Apaches is separate, separate from that. The Apaches – as we all know, Egypt faces a significant and growing threat from extremist groups, particularly in the Sinai, and in the past several months has used Apache helicopters as a significant component of its counterterrorism operations in the Sinai. So we believe these new helicopters will help the Egyptian Government counter extremists who threaten not just Egypt, but Israeli security as well

as the United States. And this is a broader element of our – one element of a broader counterterrorism strategy.

QUESTION: So explaining this, what's – I mean, saying this, what is the next step taken by the Administration or the – Congress is going to do anything, any say about this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, part of – let me get to answer Matt's question, which answers yours as well. So the next step here is we plan to initially move forward with 650 million of FY 2014 FMF financing, pending congressional notification and approval. That's obviously the next step for that process, which will support these critical security efforts and continue to fund contracts for other goods and services.

Separately from that, as was noted in the readout we gave, we continue to urge Egypt to follow through on its commitment to transition to democracy, including by conducting free, fair, and transparent elections; easing restrictions on freedom of expression; assembly in the media. And those are steps that Egypt needs to take, even while we take these steps on our end.

QUESTION: So part of the aid now is, let's say, suspending or frozen till that factor is achieved, right? The --

MS. PSAKI: Well, there are --

QUESTION: Which is the last part of – you said – you mentioned.

MS. PSAKI: There are certain limitations that continue to exist because they have not met all of the certifications, including these steps taken that I just outlined. There is additional funding that I just outlined through – that once we go through the congressional notification, and pending their approval, that we would be able to obligate.

QUESTION: Is there any timeframe for this, or just like whenever it's happened?

MS. PSAKI: We will begin congressional notifications soon.

QUESTION: Do you know how much of the 650 million in FMF is actually going to be paid to American military contractors or defense contractors?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have that level of detail. I'm happy to check with our team.

QUESTION: Is it possible to find out? Because I'm just curious: it seems that this is – this may be less of a boon to the Egyptians than it is to American companies, at least in terms of dollars. Clearly, they provide services to the Egyptians in parts, but that – a lot of this money isn't actually going to end up in Egypt. It's going to end up back in – back here.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. I will check and see if we have any additional breakdown.

QUESTION: Also, can I just – can I – on this 650 million, does it include the 10 Apaches? Is the cost of the --

MS. PSAKI: No.

QUESTION: That's separate?

MS. PSAKI: Separate. That is separate.

QUESTION: And then how much is still outstanding of the annual – of the FY 2014 money?

MS. PSAKI: Well, it's about 1.5, so we can get you a more exact number, but --

QUESTION: It's about 1.5 that is still outstanding, or the total is about --

QUESTION: Total.

MS. PSAKI: Total, total.

QUESTION: -- 1.5, of which 650 million --

MS. PSAKI: Correct.

QUESTION: Okay, is going for --

MS. PSAKI: Correct, and that's not all FMF. That's the total --

QUESTION: But 1.3 of the 1.5 total is military?

MS. PSAKI: Correct, is FMF.

QUESTION: Yeah.

QUESTION: Could we get a breakdown of that, some sort of global --

MS. PSAKI: Sure. And just so I clarify, of what the breakdown of the 1.5 is?

QUESTION: Yes.

QUESTION: Of what has been paid out, what hasn't?

MS. PSAKI: It is more challenging than you would think --

QUESTION: I imagine.

MS. PSAKI: -- but I will check with our team and see what we can put together.

QUESTION: Okay.

QUESTION: We're sure you're up to the challenge, Jen.

MS. PSAKI: Certainly.

QUESTION: And is the final – the final – is the final certification on democracy a democratic piece? Is – that's what's holding up the rest of the 1.5 billion, minus the 650 million, the 10 Apaches, whatever that adds up to?

MS. PSAKI: Well, the 650 is not the maximum that we'd be able to give under these certifications. I don't have that specific number. I will see if that's available. But the additional certification, 6(a) and 6(b), are part of what we're waiting for, and they relate to some of the funding as well.

QUESTION: Just so I --

QUESTION: So 650 million is what you're going to – sorry, Arshad – is that what – that's what you're planning to release now once you've done the congressional notification?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So you could be under those initial certifications – the Israel (inaudible) and the strategic relationship – you can actually release more monies, then?

MS. PSAKI: Technically, you could, yes.

QUESTION: And it is – just so I'm clear, the – your ability to release additional funds prior to the 6(a) and 6(b) certifications rests on the exceptions that are in the law for the purposes that you described – security in Sinai and so on?

MS. PSAKI: Sorry, I don't – I'm not sure I totally understand your question. All right? Can you repeat it one more time?

QUESTION: So – it might have been good to have a briefing on this last night when we were trying to write this, but as I understand it – and I may not understand it correctly at all – the law gives you the ability to release certain funds with the two certifications that you described --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- but absent the democracy and election-related certifications?

MS. PSAKI: Correct.

QUESTION: So my question was: Am I correct in understanding that it's not like there's a dollar figure that you can release? You can release any funds within the amount that has been appropriated, provided that they only go for those accepted purposes that are in the law, which I think includes Sinai security, counterterrorism, et cetera?

MS. PSAKI: Border security, nonproliferation, counterterrorism, and --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: -- for a current FMF contract.

QUESTION: But that money -- it's not cash. It's already designated towards items and programs, right?

MS. PSAKI: That's my understanding, yes.

QUESTION: And then where does the -- sorry, where does the actual money for the Apaches come from? Does that come from 2013 funds?

MS. PSAKI: I believe that's correct, that it -- not from FY2014. So that is a fair guess, but let me double-check that for you as well --

QUESTION: Okay, thank you.

MS. PSAKI: -- to make sure that's the year it comes from.

QUESTION: So it's ten Apaches plus this extra 650 million --

MS. PSAKI: Correct. Correct.

Go ahead, Nicole.

QUESTION: Just to follow up.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: I -- still some Egypt, sorry. The Secretary said, or you said in your statement about the Secretary, that he wasn't yet able to certify that they're moving towards a fully democratic transition.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: What does he need to see in order to be able to certify that? And what would that release in terms of aid?

MS. PSAKI: Well, in order to see that, as was noted in there, that includes conducting free, fair, and transparent elections, easing restrictions on freedom of expression, assembly, and media. There are obviously additional steps, but those are some core steps that we would need to see them conclude.

In terms of additional funding, let me check that and see if we can get a description for all of you.

QUESTION: In terms of free speech and free media and so on, in the conversation, did the jailing of journalists come up at all, specifically those that are on trial right now?

MS. PSAKI: I don't have that level of detail. I will check and see. Obviously, that's something we've spoken publicly about --

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: -- he's expressed concerns privately about. I will see if it --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. PSAKI: -- is something that specifically came up in this conversation.

QUESTION: As well as the (inaudible) meeting.

MS. PSAKI: Understood.

Yes. Go ahead.

QUESTION: In days, Nabil Fahmy will be here in town. Did you have any schedule for when he is going to be in this building or something?

MS. PSAKI: So he will be in Washington next week to meet with Secretary Kerry and senior Administration officials as well as members of Congress. In terms of what his schedule is while he's here, I would point you to his team. I believe that the Secretary has a meeting with him on Tuesday.

April 9, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Today you – State Department released media note regarding the terrorist designation of Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: The simple thing: What is the significance or the importance or the meaning or the wisdom, if I can use this word, to use this now – I mean – or to release this now? Do you have any explanation?

MS. PSAKI: Well, we provide – our team does regular reviews of designations and they announce them typically when a decision is made. I know we put out an extensive media note on this. I'm not sure I have very much to add. I would point you to that. And if you have any specific questions, I can certainly connect you with our team who handles that.

QUESTION: So you want me not to ask now or --

MS. PSAKI: Certainly. Go ahead.

QUESTION: Go ahead? Okay. Because the reason I'm asking is that – the question I want to ask about this media note was: Do you think that this designation of this Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis help the – better understanding or the understanding or your cooperation with the Egyptian Government to combat terrorism in that region, in Sinai? One of these question is this or --

MS. PSAKI: Is it going to help with our cooperation?

QUESTION: Or help – I mean, helping more or --

MS. PSAKI: In what capacity?

QUESTION: Because it's like – it was – this issue was raised almost – like, almost a year now, and more than a year – the presence of these terrorist entities or militias or whatever, jihadists, whatever you can call it. And the Egyptian Government was raising the issue and necessity to combat it and terrorism and even sometimes use means that it was criticized or, let's say, by – not just by (inaudible), by international community regarding how they handle these issues and violate some of the human rights.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. And as you know and as is noted in the media note, there are a number of reasons including a recent July 2012 attack against a Sinai pipeline that have led to this designation. In terms of what it will mean, I don't have any prediction of that. Obviously, these decisions are made for a range of reasons and based on what our team feels is necessary, and there are a range of consequences, as you know, as well.

QUESTION: The third one, maybe you have announced (inaudible) not just it's fine that I can ask: It's the – this issue was raised when the Secretary was on the Hill, like, three weeks ago on the House --

MS. PSAKI: During his hearings?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And it was mentioned by the members of the House Foreign Affairs Committees that in particular, the Egyptian Government – or Egyptian army, in particular, using the Apache helicopters to follow this or to combat this kind of terrorism. And it was because these Apache helicopters for a while, it's like if they're suspended or whatever you can call it.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: How is this issue going to be reviewed on base of this media note or recognition of, designation of Ansar Bayt as a terrorist group, or --

MS. PSAKI: Apache helicopters or which piece?

QUESTION: Apache helicopters.

MS. PSAKI: They're separate issues, and obviously, the materials and – that we provide and sell Egypt are a separate issue. This is an issue – I think it's pretty clearly outlined, the reasons for the designation in the media note.

QUESTION: Yeah. The reason that I'm asking, because Egyptian Government, as they said, they are using these Apache helicopters to combat this terrorist group.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Now, you are recognizing this terrorist group as a dangerous entity.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: So somehow, somebody has to combat these terrorists using Apache helicopters.

MS. PSAKI: I'm not aware of any change on our position on that issue.

QUESTION: Okay. That's fine. Thank you.

April 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: The United States is deeply troubled by the decision today of an Egyptian court to uphold an on-appeal three-year prison sentences and substantial fines for Mohamed Adel, Ahmed Douma, and Ahmed Maher – three peaceful, pro-democracy activists. Their continued imprisonment under a law that severely restricts the universal right to peaceful assembly and expression runs counter the Egyptian Government’s commitment to fostering an open electoral environment and a transition process that protects the universal rights of all Egyptians. We urge the Egyptian Government to exercise its constitutional authority to commute these excessive sentences, which are not in line with the rights guaranteed in Egypt’s new constitution, Egypt’s international obligations, or the government’s own commitment not to return to Mubarak-era practices.

...

QUESTION: You started at the very top. How did you make your displeasure known about – to the Egyptians about Mohammed Adel and Ahmed Maher? Did you – did anyone speak with anyone there, or just that they --

MS. PSAKI: We have an expansive team on the ground --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. PSAKI: -- so they certainly make their – our concerns known when that is relevant.

QUESTION: Same topic, sort of?

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: Today is 100 days since the Al Jazeera English journalists --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- have been in captivity. I’m just wondering if you guys are --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: -- in touch at all with the Egyptians on that.

MS. PSAKI: Well, we are, of course, watching closely the trial and continue to convey our deep concerns directly to the Government of Egypt. We urge the government to drop these charges and release these journalists who have been detained. We remain deeply concerned about the restrictions of freedom of expression in Egypt, including the targeting of Egyptian and foreign

journalists simply for expressing their views. Journalists, regardless of affiliation, should be protected and permitted to do their jobs free from intimidation or fear of retribution. Egypt's constitution upholds these basic rights and freedoms, and Egypt's interim government has a responsibility to ensure that they are protected.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you.

QUESTION: One more on the Egypt thing.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: Had you – I know you had previously urged the Egyptian authorities to reconsider the sentences on those three.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Had you previously urged them to commute them?

MS. PSAKI: I'd have to check on that, Arshad, and see what language we'd used previously.

QUESTION: Because the – I mean, I can check too, but the reason I ask is I think there's one more legal appeal that is still possible.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

QUESTION: And if you didn't ask them to commute it before, it suggests you've just given up on the legal process entirely, or on the court process.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm. Let me check with our team and see on that.

QUESTION: Thank you.

April 2, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

MS. HARF: In terms of Egypt, you may have seen a statement released by our Embassy in Cairo earlier today, but I'd like to reiterate here that the United States condemns in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks that took place near Cairo University earlier today, which killed at least one individual and injured many more. I believe it was two or three bombs that went off near the university. As we have said before, there is absolutely no justification for such attacks. We extend our condolences to the families and friends of those who were killed and our hopes for the swift and full recovery of those who were injured.

...

QUESTION: I believe – according to our reports, it's a brigadier, a police brigadier general who was killed in this this morning. You may not have that confirmed.

MS. HARF: I don't have that confirmed.

QUESTION: The simple question I wanted to ask is, even though I understand your condemnation of it, do you have any belief that such violence – reprehensible as it may be – simply reflects the failure of the Egyptian governing authorities to reach any kind of a political accommodation with large parts of their society? I mean, is it – are – is there not some responsibility on the other – on their side to try to reach out to their opponents?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't want to venture to guess why terrorists would undertake these kinds of attacks near a university. I don't believe anyone's claimed responsibility, but let me be clear that under no circumstances is this kind of terrorism acceptable. What we've encouraged both the government and the opposition to do is work together without violence to forge a path forward for Egypt. And I don't have the detail about the person who was killed.

...

QUESTION: At the beginning of this briefing, you mentioned a statement about what happened this morning --

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: -- and you condemned it. How do you see its – is – because you said the terrorist acts and all this description – how do you see this is different from other times? Especially because the other times, you were always stressing other incidents, similar incidents, or maybe not similar from your perspective. You're asking for reconciliation and all this, and this time you didn't mention that.

MS. HARF: Well, I was condemning a terrorist attack near the university. Obviously, our position on Egypt writ large hasn't changed – that we need the government, the opposition, all parties and groups to work together inclusively to see if we can move Egypt forward here. We have seen, as we've talked about a lot in here, some very troubling developments over the past several weeks in Egypt, so we're continuing to have those conversations as well.

I would say that Senior Advisor to the Secretary Ambassador David Thorne and State Department Counselor Ambassador Thomas Shannon are leading a U.S. delegation that includes the Treasury Department and the NSC. They're in Cairo from March 31st to April 3rd, so right now as we speak. They're meeting with senior Egyptian officials and business leaders to discuss ways to support Egypt, to encourage a sustainable and nonviolent transition to democracy, and explore ways to strengthen the Egyptian economy. So there's a delegation there right now engaging at a very high level about how we can work with them going forward.

QUESTION: And as much as I remember, this is the same delegation was in U.A.E. --

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and other places to support, to get --

MS. HARF: Apparently, they like traveling together, yes.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: It is. It is.

QUESTION: So there is another issue which is related to Egypt in – the prime minister of – British prime minister orders inquiring to Muslim Brotherhood in London.

MS. HARF: I saw those reports. Let me check with our – I don't --

QUESTION: Yes, please.

MS. HARF: Do you want a comment on that, or --

QUESTION: Comment on that. I mean, it's like --

MS. HARF: Let me check with our folks on that.

QUESTION: Do you think it's a proper thing to do, how it is proper?

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: Because it's looking to Muslim Brotherhood activities, whether political or military.

MS. HARF: Let me check with our folks and see. I don't have the specifics, because I have seen some of those reports.

QUESTION: And if you are going – you are appreciating something like this, or thinking it's an obstacle in the reconciliation that you are asking for.

MS. HARF: Yeah. Let me check with our team. I did see those reports.

April 1, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: I don't know if you covered Egypt, but --

MS. HARF: We didn't.

QUESTION: Okay. Did you cover the Apache helicopters?

MS. HARF: We did not cover Egypt, no.

QUESTION: Okay. No, you did not cover Egypt?

MS. HARF: Uh-uh.

QUESTION: Okay then. Now, you're saying that there has been no decision to hold back the Apaches. That's what you just said, or that's what the Department said today, or it was attributed to you that it's not true that the Apaches will be held until further notice, the Apaches that are being repaired in America, and --

MS. HARF: I'm not sure what I --

QUESTION: This is a statement came out of the American Embassy in Cairo --

QUESTION: In Cairo.

MS. HARF: Okay.

QUESTION: -- regarding some reports that somehow --

MS. HARF: Okay.

QUESTION: -- U.S. is withholding.

MS. HARF: Okay.

QUESTION: Thank you. Thank you, Thomas.

MS. HARF: It's not my -- (laughter).

QUESTION: Yeah. So --

MS. HARF: I don't remember making a statement about Apaches today.

QUESTION: No, I'm saying you --

MS. HARF: No, no, I know. But I'm -- I haven't seen the -- clearly, I haven't seen the statement. I am happy to look at it. In terms of our assistance to Egypt, it's my understanding that nothing's changed since we made the decision to suspend some of it months ago. I'm happy to take a look at the statement and see if there's anything new, Said. I'm sorry about that. I just haven't seen it.

QUESTION: No problem. Thank you.

QUESTION: Pollard -- just one last one?

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: Are you aware that he waived his parole hearing today?

MS. HARF: I saw those reports.

QUESTION: Okay. Did the State Department have any involvement in that?

MS. HARF: I don't have anything else for you on that.

QUESTION: Okay.

March 27, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: So General al-Sisi declared his intention to run for president of Egypt.

MS. HARF: He did.

QUESTION: I wanted to know if there was a specific reaction from the State Department.

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm, yep. Well, we have obviously seen that he resigned his position as defense minister and announced his candidacy for the presidency. As you know, we do not support individual candidates or individual parties. It is up to the people of Egypt to determine their future.

And we have also repeatedly said that as the people of Egypt go to the polls to do that, it must be in a climate that's free from intimidation, where people feel they can vote for and support whatever party and whatever candidate they want to. And we have raised concerns with the interim Egyptian Government about the ability for citizens to freely express their opinions, most recently, of course, with these mass convictions of people with death sentences, but for many, many months now. So as the election process moves forward, we will continue to urge the Egyptian Government to do so in a manner that is free, fair, transparent, where candidates are able to campaign freely – any candidates are able to campaign freely – without fear of harassment or intimidation.

QUESTION: And so al-Sisi is widely expected to win. He has a lot of support in Egypt.

MS. HARF: Are you doing internal polling in Egypt? (Laughter.)

QUESTION: I'm just following what I see in the media. But I just want to know, would the State Department welcome working with an al-Sisi administration?

MS. HARF: We will work with who the people of Egypt decide should be the leader of Egypt.

QUESTION: But I recall when Mr. Sisi came on the scene after the July 3rd whatever, coup/non-coup, there was some sort of an expression of perhaps being a bit annoyed with the prospect of Mr. Sisi running for president. Do you still hold that position?

MS. HARF: I don't think anyone ever said they were annoyed with --

QUESTION: All right. Would you be annoyed to see the general who basically changed the course of politics in Egypt run for almost like a guaranteed election?

MS. HARF: What we want to see is an election that is free and fair, where the people get to decide their leaders. Who that is is not up to us. People can run. Let the people decide.

QUESTION: So you believe that if Mr. Sisi runs and wins, as he's sure – as most polls indicate that he surely will win, will that exacerbate tensions with the United States in any way?

MS. HARF: Said, we're going to take a look at the process here. We're going to take a look at the process for this election, how free, how fair, how transparent it is, if there's intimidation, if candidates are allowed to campaign freely. All of that will go into our assessment of where Egypt is in this transition that has had, quite frankly, some bumps in the road over the past six, eight, nine months now.

QUESTION: Could you give us an idea on the status of the U.S. Embassy in Cairo?

MS. HARF: What do you mean the status?

QUESTION: In terms of how it is functioning, who is running it --

MS. HARF: It's functioning very well.

QUESTION: -- its access to opposition groups.

MS. HARF: The charge there is Marc Sievers.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: As you know, we don't have an ambassador there now.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: Fully running, engaging with all parties, all groups, all sides, talking to people in Egypt at all levels.

QUESTION: And finally my --

MS. HARF: And also civil society and others as well.

QUESTION: Right. Okay. My last question on this: Are there any plans for perhaps elevating the diplomatic status with an ambassador to Egypt --

MS. HARF: Well --

QUESTION: -- anytime soon?

MS. HARF: This isn't an indication of diplomatic status in the bilateral relationship, Said.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: When we have personnel announcements to make about ambassadors, we will make them.

QUESTION: So should we --

MS. HARF: Well, the White House actually will make them.

QUESTION: -- expect an announcement soon?

MS. HARF: I'm sorry?

QUESTION: Should we expect one soon?

MS. HARF: I don't have a timeframe for you.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

March 26, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: If you have any comment on the possible indictment of 919 people, including the murshid, the guide or the --

MS. HARF: Yes. So I don't know if folks just saw - we put out a statement from Secretary Kerry right before the briefing on the 529 and then the new trial as well.

QUESTION: Right, right.

MS. HARF: So I'm glad we were able to get that statement out. Obviously, this is something he cares very deeply about. Let me see what I have on this. I know this was just announced, if I'm correct.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: Nothing new than yesterday. As the Secretary said, he urged the appropriate Egyptian authorities to remedy the situation. These sentences cannot go forward. This is a blatant disregard for justice and really defies any sort of logic that these could be free and fair.

QUESTION: So, I mean, this total disregard for justice – but the Egyptians are – seem to be sort of disregarding of your demands or the rest of the world's to adhere to --

MS. HARF: International standards for free and fair judicial processes.

QUESTION: International standards, exactly, okay.

MS. HARF: These aren't our standards; these are the world's standards.

QUESTION: But should – in the event that Egypt goes ahead with these indictments and so on, should it be subject to some sort of sanctions, as you do in other countries?

MS. HARF: I don't have any predictions for you on what our policy might look like towards them if they go ahead with them. We do not think they should go ahead with them.

QUESTION: Yes, please, the same issue. I mean, I'm not asking about the policy or the reaction. Just yesterday, you mentioned that you will answer a question related to the kind of – the contacts you have regarding this issue in particular. What kind of contacts you have in the last 24 hours? It's with the officials over there --

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- it's with the embassy here? What kind of --

MS. HART: It's on the ground. Our charge, Mark Sievers, has been in contact with the Egyptian Government on the ground. As you know, we don't have an ambassador there right now.

March 25, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

MS. HARF: ... Implementation of yesterday's verdict imposing the death penalty on 529 defendants after a two-day trial would be unconscionable. If Egypt's leaders want to ensure a political transition to democracy that ultimately improves the stability and economic prospects of their country and their people and that's respected by the Egyptian people, they must unequivocally ensure an environment that is free of intimidation or retribution. This includes ensuring due process and fair trials for all Egyptians accused of crimes.

The verdicts handed down yesterday by the court and the commencement of another mass trial for 683 individuals today in the same court represent a flagrant disregard for basic standards of justice. The imposition of the death penalty for 529 defendants after a two-day summary proceeding cannot be reconciled with Egypt's obligations under international human rights law, and its implementation of these sentences, as I said, would be unconscionable. We cannot and should not credibly entertain the prospect that a two-day trial resulting in the sentencing of 529 people to death could respect the fair trial safeguards guaranteed by international law.

We are making clear to the Egyptian Government that these verdicts cannot be allowed to stand. The Government of Egypt should be taking action to increase the freedoms of the Egyptian people, not to suppress them, thereby feeding into the exact extremism that undermines peace and security. So today, we call on the Government of Egypt to refrain from politically motivated detentions, charges, and trials, and to ensure that all in Egypt are afforded the fair trial safeguards they are guaranteed under international law.

And with that, Lara, kick us off.

QUESTION: Okay. So we'll just pick up on Egypt then.

MS. HARF: Okay.

QUESTION: You kept saying that if the verdicts are allowed to stand it would be unconscionable. Do you expect them --

MS. HARF: Implementation would be -- of these verdicts.

QUESTION: Okay. Would you -- do you expect Egypt to change its stance on this at this point?

MS. HARF: We certainly hope they will. I don't have any predictions to make, but we hope they will.

QUESTION: And if they don't, then what will the U.S. do?

MS. HARF: Well, as you know, we have been reevaluating since July our relationship with Egypt and our policy towards Egypt. I don't have any predictions to make about what consequences might come from this. As we said, and as I reiterated yesterday, we think it's important to maintain a relationship with Egypt for a variety of security, economic, regional reasons.

But at the same time, we will make clear when actions are taken that we do not agree with and that, in turn, have the result of us changing our policy. So as you know, we are currently evaluating our aid policy; for example, some of the aid we suspended when we made that decision a few months ago. Everything that happens on the ground, including this, will play into the decision about where our assistance relationship goes from here.

QUESTION: And is that decision supposed to be made, I believe, by the end of this month?

MS. HARF: I don't know. Let me check on the specific timing.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. HARF: And there could be other repercussions. I don't have anything to preview. Again, we think it's an important relationship, and we believe by engaging with not only the government but also the other parties and groups that that will be helpful in moving their process forward, hopefully. Even when we don't agree, we still think it's important to engage, which is what we're doing right now.

QUESTION: Marie.

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: The Egyptian Government has considered all these international reactions as intervention in the judicial system in Egypt. What's your reaction to that?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't think there's any intervention in their judicial system. I think that's a preposterous allegation. We're not doing anything like intervening in their judicial system, nor do we want to. What we are doing is what we always do everywhere, to speak out for our principles and our values and, indeed, international legal principles and values when they are threatened.

QUESTION: Well --

MS. HARF: Hold on, Elise. Let me --

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. HARF: Welcome to the briefing, Elise. And that's what we're doing here. Countries that say you're intervening in our affairs, you're meddling in our affairs, often just don't like what

we're saying. We're not. It's up for the people of Egypt to decide their future. That's exactly what we've said all along. This kind of intimidation takes Egypt in the wrong direction. It takes the power out of the hands of the people to choose their future by intimidation, by charges based on political motivations, so it's actually going in the opposite direction than the people of Egypt want.

Yes.

QUESTION: Can I just follow up on that point?

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: I understand that you say that when you're speaking out about legal injustice and such. But the fact that you didn't call the ouster of President Morsy a coup, do you think that you're sending a mixed message to the Egyptian Government that some things are acceptable, and they're just kind of testing their limits, because in some cases they've been able to get away with what some people would consider injustices of a legal system?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't, and for a couple of reasons. The first is that just because we made a legal determination that we didn't have to say whether or not it was a coup, we made very clear our incredible disagreement with what they did. The President made a statement, the Secretary made statements. And indeed, we suspended some of our assistance based on what they did.

So regardless of what words we used, we took action when the Egyptian interim government did things that we did not think were acceptable. So that's why right now – we were just talking when you walked in – that we are looking at all of that assistance. We're evaluating where that relationship goes. And everything that happens on the ground plays into that decision. This obviously will play into that decision.

QUESTION: Could I ask quickly a follow up?

MS. HARF: Uh-huh. And then I'll go to you.

QUESTION: I know that the figure is really staggering, but your statement is a bit mild. I mean, I tried to look --

MS. HARF: Mild?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. HARF: I said "unconscionable" like four times.

QUESTION: I mean, but this is – I mean, basically whether this execution is carried out or not, the fact that 529 people were sentenced to death is really an outrageous thing. I tried to look --

MS. HARF: I agree with you.

QUESTION: -- at a precedent in recent history, and I couldn't find any.

MS. HARF: What words would you think I would use that would be stronger? Outrageous, shocked, unconscionable, defying logic.

QUESTION: Okay. Well, I'm not here to set policy. But I'm saying --

MS. HARF: No, but --

QUESTION: -- what actions are you willing to take? I mean, action --

MS. HARF: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- that shows your outrage does have teeth, let's say.

MS. HARF: Well, I think you've seen our policy does have teeth. As I -- again, I go back to the assistance decision that we made several months ago, when we did suspend some crucial assistance that the Egyptian Government wants as a direct result of their action. But put that into the bigger context of the relationship. There are things we continue to do with the Egyptian Government because they're in our national interest to do them, whether it's work together on counterterrorism in the Sinai, a whole host of issues. We make decisions based on our national interests and that uphold our values. That's what we're doing in Egypt. It's a balance. It's a fine line. We feel we're walking that line.

But as I said to Lara's first question, that we are reevaluating that relationship every day. We are determining if this assistance will stay suspended, if more will be suspended, if some will be brought back online. And suffice to say, things like these outrageous, shocking, unconscionable actions that the Egyptian Government is taking will, of course, have an impact on that decision.

QUESTION: I'm sorry, I missed Lara's first question. I was a bit late.

MS. HARF: It's okay.

QUESTION: But it seems that the Apache helicopters, a lot of the aid is back on track. I mean, all the stuff that's --

MS. HARF: The aid we suspended is not. Nothing changed on that.

QUESTION: Nothing has changed. That remains suspended?

MS. HARF: Mm-hmm. Absolutely.

QUESTION: Okay. Thank you.

MS. HARF: Yes. But look, we also, as I said – and I don't know exactly what you were here for at the beginning – but as I said, we believe this is an important relationship for a couple of reasons, one of which is we think it's easier and more helpful to push the Egyptian Government to do better and make better decisions if we are engaged with them, that walking away doesn't get the policy we want. And while it's difficult and while they may not always do what we want them to do, we believe it's important to remain engaged with them to help push them, that we have more leverage, in fact, by remaining engaged and not walking away.

QUESTION: On Egypt?

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: Do you agree with the Egyptian Government that the judicial system is an independent entity in Egypt? That means there is no relation between the government and the courts.

MS. HARF: Well, I don't think that I have sort of any political or internal Egyptian analysis to do on how independent the judiciary is. I'm happy to check with our folks and see if there's more to share on that. But suffice to say, we do not believe that these convictions should be implemented. As I said at the top, we believe that if they are, in fact, it would be unconscionable and that it defies logic, all international legal standards to, as I've already said, convict 529 people and today put on trial 683 more for the death penalty. I'm not going to go into an analysis of what the flow chart looks like in the Egyptian interim government. What I'm saying is this should not be implemented.

QUESTION: And they said, too, that the court didn't issue a verdict, but it issued only a decision and it can be reversed.

MS. HARF: Well, then reverse it.

QUESTION: Well, but wait a minute.

MS. HARF: Easy.

QUESTION: Wait a minute.

MS. HARF: Well, no. I mean, I don't know what the difference is between decision and verdict. Is there a difference legally?

QUESTION: Are you asking the government to reverse the decision?

MS. HARF: As I said, implementation – we are asking them not to implement the decision. We do know there's an appeals process here. We do. What we are saying is they should not implement the decision, that they should give all of these people a free and fair trial in accordance with international legal standards. And what we have said is that any trial of 529

people done over two days, much of which was in absentia, in no way could ever comport with international legal standards.

QUESTION: But in this country, even if there are many verdicts that a lot of people feel are a travesty of justice and absolutely ridiculous – but I’ve never seen the government intervene and say we’re not going to implement that decision.

MS. HARF: Well, first of all, they’re completely – they’re totally apples and oranges here.

QUESTION: Why?

MS. HARF: Because first of all, we operate in accordance with international law in terms of our domestic judicial system (a); and (b) this is – have you ever had a case in the United States where 529 people were convicted to death in two days? They’re just not the same thing.

QUESTION: No, I’m not. But are you saying clearly that the Egyptian judicial system needs reform, but you can’t ask the Egyptians or any government to personally intervene in a court case when it’s convenient, as opposed to when it’s not.

MS. HARF: I’m not asking – I didn’t say anyone specific should intervene and I’m not saying it’s convenient. I’m saying that the world is shocked by these death penalty sentences. I think all of us are. Everybody I’ve spoken to is.

QUESTION: I’m not saying --

MS. HARF: No, no, but --

QUESTION: -- that they’re not shocking and abhorrent. I’m just saying --

MS. HARF: Well, and that they’re not --

QUESTION: -- though that --

MS. HARF: -- in line with international legal standards. There’s no way that two-day trials of 529 people for the death penalty are in any way, comports with international legal standards, and that they must do that. And if they don’t, there will be consequences.

QUESTION: The mere fact that you just said two days, 529 convictions, today possibly 600 and so on – will you go and will you put on record that you consider this to be not only a kangaroo court or a miscarriage of justice, that it is a mockery, as a matter of fact, of the justice system?

MS. HARF: That – what was the last thing you said?

QUESTION: A mockery of any justice standards. I don’t know what kind of standards --

MS. HARF: Well, I think – again, I know you walked in a little late. What I said was we cannot and should not credibly entertain the prospect that a two-day trial resulting in the sentencing of 529 people to death could respect the fair trial safeguards guaranteed by international law. There's just no way. If they think these people are guilty, try them in a free and fair way, end the politicized detentions and the politicized verdicts, and then you can actually give your own people some sort of confidence in their own judicial system. This isn't about the U.S. having confidence in their judicial system. This is about the Egyptian people having confidence in their own judicial system.

QUESTION: Have you brought this up – I'm sorry if you brought it – this up in the top, but have you spoken to the Egyptian Government?

MS. HARF: We have. We raised this issue – we've raised it several times, but we raised it again today with the government in Egypt at a senior level in Cairo on the ground. And we'll --

QUESTION: The ambassador?

MS. HARF: And we'll – I'll check on who it is. I don't have that specifically here. And we'll continue to have discussions.

QUESTION: Marie.

QUESTION: Have you seen much evidence from the time – I mean, from the time of the overtaking when Morsy was overthrown until now, would you agree that Egypt's Government or rule of law has been headed in a direction that the U.S. does not agree with? Have you seen any evidence to the contrary? In other words, is there – what hope are you seeing that this will turn out to be a democratic system?

MS. HARF: Well, it's a good question. There have been a number of times, particularly with the politicized detentions of former senior leaders and others that we've expressed really serious concern about the direction this is heading in Egypt in terms of the Muslim Brotherhood, in terms of a number of things. So there hasn't been a lot of good news in this realm coming out of Egypt since July. That's true.

But this isn't the end of the story here. And what we've always said, and I think this is a hopeful sentiment that we have and that we think is possible, is that the Egyptians have a chance to do better, that since July – July was a turning point for Egypt that gave them a chance in a very tough situation, to make some changes and continue on a democratic transition. As we've said, democratic transitions all over the world take generations – decades, years – they don't happen in a few years and they don't happen over a few months. And we are hopeful that by working with the Egyptian Government and the other parties – the international community and others – that we can help get Egypt back on a good path, but there hasn't been a lot of good news.

QUESTION: Has there been any --

MS. HARF: There hasn't been.

QUESTION: Is there any precedent since July – precedent since July that Egypt – that Cairo has heeded U.S. warnings or admonitions or that they should reverse course?

MS. HARF: On anything? On judicial issues or --

QUESTION: Well, on judicial issues or government issues or non-democratic movements.

MS. HARF: Let me check with our folks and see what their thoughts are on this. It's a hard question to answer because in some ways – you don't know – you can't prove a negative or you can't prove something that didn't – could have happened but didn't. We just know what happened. So let me check with our folks and see.

I do know that our team on the ground and our team here doesn't think this is – they somehow crossed into abyss, there's no coming back from this, there's no way to bring them back on the rails in terms of their judicial process. But --

QUESTION: They don't think that.

MS. HARF: They think – they don't think they've crossed over into some abyss.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. HARF: They do still think there's a chance for Egypt to get back on track, get back on the rails. But look, we've seen even when Morsy was president, even before July, that, yes, someone can be elected democratically, but it doesn't always mean they govern democratically. And one election does not a democracy make. So I think that we're still halfway through, maybe not even, through the story of Egypt's transition, and that's why we'll keep working with them on it.

QUESTION: Have you – in your discussions with the Egyptians, have you been given any indication that the government itself kind of understands the incredulosity of what happened and that they would be reconsidering it in any way?

MS. HARF: I don't know is the answer. Let me check with our folks who've had the conversations, and we can maybe talk about it a little more tomorrow.

QUESTION: Please.

MS. HARF: Let me get a sense from them what they're getting from the Egyptians.

QUESTION: Did the U.S. embassy confirm this number to be 529? Because there are some press reports, they say less than that.

MS. HARF: Okay. I can check. It's my understanding that we think that's the number, but let me check and see if there's any discrepancy.

March 24, 2014

Marie Harf, Deputy Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Can we go to Egypt first and then – it'll be very brief --

MS. HARF: Yeah, uh-huh.

QUESTION: -- and not ponderous at all. Just any response – U.S. reaction to this – the rather large number of death sentences that were handed down?

MS. HARF: We are deeply concerned – and I would say actually pretty shocked – by the sentencing to death of 529 Egyptians related to the death of one policeman, as well as the spate of violence against police stations and security personnel in the aftermath of the clearing of two squares in mid-August. It's our understanding that over half of those convictions were in absentia. Obviously the defendants can appeal, but it simply does not seem possible that a fair review of evidence and testimony, consistent with international standards, could be accomplished with over 529 defendants in a two-day trial. It sort of defies logic.

So we have continued to call on the Egyptian Government to ensure that those detained are afforded fair proceedings that respect civil liberties, and as – that we've said many, many, many times, that the appearance of politically motivated arrests, detentions, and convictions will just continue to move Egypt's democratic transition backwards and not forwards like we hope it does.

QUESTION: Sorry, just one.

MS. HARF: Uh-huh.

QUESTION: It sort of defies logic, or it does defy logic?

MS. HARF: I'll retool that. It defies logic that over 529 defendants could be tried in a two-day period in accordance with international standards. Yeah.

QUESTION: Has there been any current or any similar situation where that number of people was actually sentenced to death in one trial?

MS. HARF: I don't know. It's a good historical question. I don't know the answer.

QUESTION: Okay. But shouldn't this really – more than just shock – I mean, shouldn't you be outraged to the point of actually taking some action?

MS. HARF: Well, what action are you suggesting we take?

QUESTION: Well, I mean, you're constantly --

MS. HARF: We're certainly raising it with the Egyptian Government.

QUESTION: -- you're constantly waving the sanctions scare for other countries and so on. Why not Egypt in this case? I mean, this is 500 people sentenced to death all in one shot. That's -- no pun intended, but I mean, 500 --

MS. HARF: Yes. I think a few points. The first is that we're still -- we're talking to the Egyptian Government. We're trying to ascertain all the facts here. Obviously, as I said, it's a pretty shocking number. But we're gathering all the facts and determining what we do going forward.

Our policy towards Egypt all along, since July, has been governed by a few principles. One is that it's an important relationship. The second -- so we don't want to completely cut off the relationship, as you saw when we made the decision about aid. The second is that there are principles that we stand up for that include things like right to a free and fair trial that we will continue pushing with the Egyptian Government. And the third is that we will engage with all parties and all groups in Egypt to make sure that as their democratic transition moves forward, it's done so in an inclusive manner. Obviously, there have been setbacks along the way and there's much more work to do, but we're going to keep working with the Egyptian Government, including to get more information about this situation.

...

QUESTION: So do you think the Egyptian authorities are serious about carrying these sentences through? And what do you think this kind of trial and similar trials that have been taking place in Egypt say about justice system in that country at this moment?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't know if they're serious. What we've said -- I don't want to ascribe motives here or motivations here -- what we've said is that everybody needs to be given a trial in accordance with international standards and that politically -- there's no place for politically motivated arrests, detentions, convictions, in a country that's moving towards democracy. So we've been very clear about the fact that these are setbacks, that politically motivated arrests are not acceptable, and that they have been pretty significant bumps in the road here as we've tried to work with Egypt to move its democratic transition forward. I'm not going to sugarcoat it and say that it's been easy or without problems, and I think this is an example of that.

QUESTION: What about the justice system?

MS. HARF: Well, I don't think I probably want to make a broader analysis of the justice system writ large, but what we have said is that there have been a number of politically motivated arrests and convictions and detentions in Egypt since July, and that that has been very disturbing. And it's a trend we are worried about, it's a trend we don't want to see continue, and we'll keep working with the interim government to see if we can make some progress here.

March 20, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: It was reported today that Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy had a phone call with Secretary Kerry. Do you have any update about that?

MS. PSAKI: I think this was a couple of days ago. And he's been in regular contact with him about the importance of our long relationship with Egypt, the importance of our security relationship and our strategic relationship. But I will check with our team and see if there's more to share from the call. It was on Monday.

QUESTION: Yes. There is a follow-up question about --

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: One of the issues it was raised last week when Secretary Kerry was on the Hill the necessity of Apache helicopters in the counterterrorism effort, especially in Sinai. And he stressed more than a time that it was an important not just for Egypt; it's for U.S. and for Israel and others in the region. And it was -- he mentioned more than one time that very soon or soon -- I don't know what is the difference -- it's going to be decided to restore this relation. Do you have anything to say about that?

MS. PSAKI: I think he -- I don't think that was the exact quote. But obviously, there's an ongoing review of our relationship. As you know, we put a range of assistance on hold. Last year there was some assistance, security assistance, that moved forward because it was in our national security interest. But I don't have any prediction for you on when any decision will be reached on the rest.

QUESTION: So you mentioned that it was not -- I'm sorry, correct me if I am wrong. You mentioned that is not exact words. So what was --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have the quote in front of me. I recall it more along the lines of there'll be a decision made. So --

March 11, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: We also are deeply concerned about reports that detained political activist Ahmed Maher, Ahmed Douma, and Mohamed Adel were abused and beaten by security forces prior to yesterday's court session in Egypt. If true, there is no justification for such treatment. We look to the Egyptian Government to ensure the safety of all those arrested or detained. We also look to the Egyptian Government to ensure that all those arrested or detained are afforded due process and fair and transparent trials and that the law is applied equitably and free of political bias. We have seen reports that the Government of Egypt plans to conduct an investigation into this incident, and we urge that the investigation be thorough and transparent.

March 10, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: All right. My last one is just a housekeeping thing from a subject that I wish was – well, whatever. Have you – are you aware that – if the State Department or the Embassy in Cairo has lodged a formal complaint with the Egyptians over the treatment of Medea Benjamin when she was detained at the airport?

MS. PSAKI: They have not. Let me give you a little more information on just how this typically works. We do not – we would not inquire about a – about treatment unless that was a question posed by the individual asking us to do that. That has not happened in this case.

QUESTION: So --

MS. PSAKI: We have been in touch, as I said, about other issues, including our inability to reach her last week or the week before.

QUESTION: You've been in touch with her about that?

MS. PSAKI: We've reached out to Egyptian authorities about that, as I said on Friday.

QUESTION: You've reached out to Egyptian authorities as to why you were not able to see her before she was deported?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Okay. But she has not – and if I understand what you said correctly, she has not asked you to make a complaint to the Egyptians about her treatment. Is that correct?

MS. PSAKI: Correct. We have not received such a request from Ms. Benjamin at this time.

QUESTION: Is that a requirement for you to lodge a protest?

MS. PSAKI: It is standard practice for us to gain an individual's permission before raising allegations of mistreatment, so that has not happened in this case.

QUESTION: Okay. But presumably, if the situation was dire enough, you don't – I mean, it's not a requirement for you to have permission or a request from the person who was allegedly mistreated, is it?

MS. PSAKI: Well --

QUESTION: You can do it without that?

MS. PSAKI: Not to get too technical here, but I'll just go there. In the Foreign Affairs Manual --

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: -- it says that we must "gain the permission to protest the abuse or mistreatment." So that is outlined in the Foreign Affairs Manual in that capacity.

QUESTION: And absent that, you are not allowed to protest?

MS. PSAKI: I will have to check with more specific details about what we are and aren't allowed to do, but that is standard operating procedure, so that's why we've proceeded in this manner.

QUESTION: Okay.

March 7, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: ... So in all seriousness, I have one thing at the top on Egypt and the UN Human Rights Council joint statement. The United States remains concerned about the climate for freedom of expression and freedom of assembly and association in Egypt. To underscore that concern, we cosigned today a cross-regional joint statement on Egypt at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva which was read by the Icelandic delegation. We were pleased to join 27 countries to reiterate our common concern for the universal rights – universal human rights of all Egyptian citizens. In addition, and separately, the international community clearly condemns the reprehensible terrorist attacks that have taken place in Egypt.

The statement also reflects a broad consensus that restrictions to peaceful assembly, association, and expression run counter to Egypt's pursuit of stability and democracy, and that a free press is an essential pillar of any democratic society. It further expresses our concern about the disproportionate use of lethal force by security forces against demonstrators, noting that even when faced with persistent security challenges, security forces have a duty to respect and observe Egypt's international human rights obligations and commitments.

...

QUESTION: On Egypt and the cross-statement, is there any indication that with all these statements that the Egypt Government's actually listening? I mean, what happens after this statement?

MS. PSAKI: Well, that's hard for me to evaluate, but it doesn't mean we don't think it's still essential and important to express concerns and raise concerns when we see them. And obviously, we have taken steps in terms of freezing certain assistance, and – but speaking out when we see human rights abuses or where we see brutality is something that, as the United States Government, we feel is incredibly important. Whether or not they're listening, I can't make an evaluation of that.

QUESTION: Well, they haven't said – no one's come to the United States and said anything about – like they haven't responded to not just the statement of --

MS. PSAKI: The Human Rights Report? The report I mentioned?

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: Not that I'm aware of. I mean, obviously there's a range of discussions that happen every day, and as a part of that, certainly they could have, but I don't have anything to read out for you in terms of that.

...

QUESTION: -- with housekeeping things, I'll give you my two. One, I understand that Medea Benjamin has signed a Privacy Act waiver now and that you will be able to tell us precisely what happened on the ground in Cairo that fateful day.

MS. PSAKI: I certainly can. Get out your pen.

QUESTION: Did you fax it to her, Matt?

QUESTION: No, I would have, though. (Laughter.)

MS. PSAKI: He was active on Twitter about this. We can confirm that Medea Benjamin was -- so because she signed a Privacy Act waiver, we can confirm that she was detained by Egyptian immigration authorities upon her arrival in Cairo on March 3rd, 2014. Egyptian authorities reported to the U.S. Embassy in Cairo that they were holding a U.S. citizen around 3:00 a.m. local time on March 4th. A consular officer attempted to contact Ms. Benjamin directly multiple times. The consular officer was unable to make contact with her prior to her deportation at 11:53 a.m. that same day, but was able to talk to immigration officials and several of her friends as well as inform U.S. consular staff in Turkey. While in Turkey -- because she was put on a plane back to Turkey -- on March 4th, Ms. Benjamin was contacted by phone by a consular officer at 8:30 p.m. local time to check on her welfare and to arrange a visit the following morning. The U.S. Embassy in Ankara also requested that the Turkish authorities grant Ms. Benjamin humanitarian parole to allow her to seek appropriate medical care for the injuries she sustained in Egypt. She was transported to a local hospital, where she received a medical examination and treatment for a dislocated shoulder. A consular officer then visited with Ms. Benjamin at the airport the next morning at 10 a.m. She was given a Privacy Act waiver to sign, but she deferred, as we all know, stating that she wished to consult with her legal team first. She was then deported, arriving in the United States the evening of March 1st. And she signed --

QUESTION: No, no, no.

MS. PSAKI: March 5th, sorry.

QUESTION: March --

MS. PSAKI: March 5th, and she signed -- that would be reversing -- that would be time travel and backwards -- and signed a Privacy Act waiver, which was delivered to the Department of State just today.

QUESTION: Okay. So --

QUESTION: Bravo.

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: Thank you.

QUESTION: Thank you very much for that, and thanks, CA, for it.

MS. PSAKI: I will.

QUESTION: Do you know, was the -- let's talk about Cairo.

MS. PSAKI: Yes.

QUESTION: Because she herself has been very complimentary of the Istanbul embassy and -- sorry, consulate, and its active -- but she alleges that in Cairo, basically she was ignored. Originally, when this question was asked, you said that there had been contact between her and a consular officer.

MS. PSAKI: You're right.

QUESTION: That was not correct.

MS. PSAKI: I was incorrect.

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. PSAKI: And there were obviously several steps in this, hence my confusion, but --

QUESTION: Do you know, was there an effort made to get to see her in person in Cairo, and if there was, why that didn't happen?

MS. PSAKI: So a consular officer did attempt to make contact with Ms. Benjamin on several occasions, calling --

QUESTION: Right, by phone.

MS. PSAKI: By phone.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: But obviously that's a step in the process. Unfortunately, they were unable to connect. However, the consular officer was able to connect with her friends, as you know. It's not standard practice – and I just learned this too – for a consular officer to visit a U.S. citizen who was not given permission to enter a country. However, we – because we couldn't reach her – I mean, it was – and we had reached through Egyptian authorities. There wasn't a way to make contact about the next steps in the process.

QUESTION: I'm sorry, who was not given permission to enter the country?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: You're saying that she did not have an Egyptian visa?

MS. PSAKI: She did have a visa, but a visa doesn't give you --

QUESTION: Oh, oh, oh. I see what you're saying.

MS. PSAKI: -- permission to enter a country.

QUESTION: So if you're stuck in limbo, kind of, if you've been detained at the airport, that doesn't – that's not the same as --

MS. PSAKI: Well, it allows you to travel to a port of entry, like an airport.

QUESTION: Right, but that's not the same in consular terms as someone being arrested for, I don't know, hitting some – theft, and going to an actual jail. Is that what you're saying?

MS. PSAKI: Right. The – well, or going --

QUESTION: So if you're --

MS. PSAKI: -- or exiting the port of entry. Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: If you're in immigration limbo --

MS. PSAKI: Yep.

QUESTION: -- you – consular access isn't required?

MS. PSAKI: Yes.

QUESTION: I mean, the host country doesn't have to provide.

MS. PSAKI: And consular – yes. Consular access also requires cooperation, and, of course, permission from the local authorities. So permission to visit her was not granted in time to perform a welfare and whereabouts visit before she was deported.

QUESTION: Okay. All right. And my last one on this and hopefully this will be it forever, is: Do you – in your original answer to the question the other day, you said that she had been provided all appropriate consular access. Speaking just about Cairo, does that story – what happened in Cairo, do you stand by that?

MS. PSAKI: Yes, because we attempted to reach out to her.

QUESTION: That she received all --

MS. PSAKI: I was incorrect in stating that they had reached her. Obviously, officials reached her in Turkey and provided assistance in Turkey.

QUESTION: Right, right. But I'm talking about the second part of your original statement, the "all appropriate" --

QUESTION: "All appropriate assistance."

QUESTION: -- she was provided with "all appropriate assistance" in Cairo. You stand – is that part correct, or is that incorrect?

MS. PSAKI: That is correct.

QUESTION: That is – but you're talking about Turkey, right?

MS. PSAKI: No. I'm talking about – obviously, there were attempts to --

QUESTION: So you're basically --

MS. PSAKI: -- reach her.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: Those were not successful.

QUESTION: Right.

MS. PSAKI: That happens from time to time.

QUESTION: Well, wouldn't it be more accurate to say you tried to provide her with all appropriate consular assistance, but you were unable to get through to her? Is that --

MS. PSAKI: Sure. That is a fair statement.

QUESTION: All right. Okay.

QUESTION: Could I just ask --

QUESTION: My -- sorry.

QUESTION: Sorry. I just wanted to ask, and I don't know if you're able to answer this --

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: -- Ms. Benjamin has alleged that her dislocated shoulder came about as the result of her treatment by the Egyptian authorities. Is that your understanding of what happened as well?

MS. PSAKI: We don't have -- I can't confirm the cause of her injury or details on that. She was, as you know, because I just stated it, treated in Turkey for her dislocated shoulder. But we'd refer you to her and refer you to the Egyptian police for any other details on what happened.

QUESTION: And has there been any -- sorry, Arshad --

QUESTION: No, go ahead, go ahead.

QUESTION: -- has there been any representation made from the Embassy in Cairo to the Egyptian authorities about any perceived unnecessarily rough handling of Ms. Benjamin?

MS. PSAKI: I'm happy to check on that and see if there has been.

QUESTION: Yeah. I'd be interested also whether Ms. Benjamin asked for you to raise that issue with the Egyptians. I mean, if she's claiming it's a result of her treatment or mistreatment, or -- then, did she ask you to raise it, and have you done so?

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: All right. So my last housekeeping one is to -- that --

MS. PSAKI: We have -- let me just add one thing.

QUESTION: Oh.

MS. PSAKI: We have contacted the Egyptian authorities to clarify what she was told in terms of our outreach or whether a consular official had reached out and why we were unable to schedule a consular visit with her as well.

QUESTION: In Cairo.

MS. PSAKI: Correct.

QUESTION: And just – and one other thing – what – when you – obviously, some people don't have international phones. I have no idea what is her case. But the effort to contact her, was that just calling whatever is her cell phone number, or was it calling Egyptian authorities?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as I said, we were in touch with both, all of that.

QUESTION: Yeah.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Yeah. So --

MS. PSAKI: And her friends, which we were also – friends and family, which we were also in touch with.

QUESTION: Yeah, but I would think the people most able to put you in touch with her were probably the people detaining her, right?

MS. PSAKI: Right. And we were in contact with the Egyptian authorities as well.

QUESTION: Yeah.

March 5, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: All right. Before going on to more – potentially more urgent matters, I just want to clear up a little – do a little housekeeping from yesterday --

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: -- on this Medea Benjamin in Egypt story.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: I understand, and please tell me if I'm correct, that you guys have not yet gotten a Privacy Act waiver from her. Is that correct?

MS. PSAKI: That is correct.

QUESTION: And does that mean in the absence of that, that you're unable to say anything about the case, or do your comments from yesterday at the briefing still stand?

MS. PSAKI: They stand, but let me just give you a little more information on how this works. So we cannot share information about a specific U.S. citizen's arrest without – or detention even, without his or her written permission. So absent written authorization, we're unable to share details, of course, about individual cases.

QUESTION: Okay. And those details would include what assistance may or may not have been rendered to that person?

MS. PSAKI: That's correct. Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: But – and I just still want to make sure we get this. But if and when you do get a Privacy Act waiver with all the correct boxes checked and – you will be able to?

MS. PSAKI: Correct. We can – we would be able to provide more information.

QUESTION: All right. And then last on this just to make sure. So the comments that you made yesterday at the – in here about this situation, though, stand despite the Privacy Act considerations?

MS. PSAKI: That we – I'm just trying to recall what was stated, but --

QUESTION: That you were in touch with her and that she received all – or that she was offered and received all appropriate consular assistance.

MS. PSAKI: Right. Nothing has changed.

QUESTION: Okay, all right. Now --

QUESTION: Can I just follow up --

QUESTION: Yeah.

QUESTION: -- very quickly. Where is she now?

MS. PSAKI: I can't provide any more details to you, Said, than what I've already provided.

QUESTION: Are you – let me ask you something.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: The impression is that you're not giving this case the proper attention because she was going to Gaza. Is that true?

MS. PSAKI: Said, broadly speaking, and I can't speak to this particular case, we treat all American citizens and their safety overseas with the utmost focus and attention. And that is the case regardless. So that is not an accurate depiction.

QUESTION: Thank you.

QUESTION: Yes, please. But in general, between the arrest of a person in a certain place in a certain country and the meeting by – arranged by the Embassy to meet this person which – him or her, who is informing the Embassy that somebody is there at the airport or somebody at any place?

MS. PSAKI: It really --

QUESTION: Because you – so just to explain. I mean, you explaining the --

MS. PSAKI: Sure. So broadly speaking --

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: -- oftentimes it's local authorities. And after local authorities notify the embassy or consulate of a U.S. citizen's arrest or detention, a consular officer will visit the citizen as soon as possible. Typically, in the initial visit, the consular officer ascertains the individual's physical well-being and conditions of the arrest or detention. And if that individual wishes, the family and friends can be notified. So that's kind of what the standard practice is. Every case is different.

QUESTION: For me the missing link is that to be informed in order to be in touch with the person --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- who is doing that? The person or the authorities or foreign authorities or --

MS. PSAKI: Typically, local authorities, but every case is different.

...

QUESTION: I'm not sure if you saw this in a report by the National Council for Human Rights. It's a government-appointed human rights committee. They came out with a report today criticizing both the government and pro-Morsy supporters for an investigation they concluded on the breakup of pro-Morsy supporters in Rabaa Square. Have you seen the report? Do you think it's --

MS. PSAKI: Whose report is this? I'm sorry.

QUESTION: Sure. It's a government-appointed human rights council. It's called the National Council for Human Rights. So --

QUESTION: Egyptian.

MS. PSAKI: Egyptian Government-appointed, okay.

QUESTION: Correct. And today, they issued a report investigating the government's crackdown of pro-Morsy supporters in Rabaa al-Adawiya Square. So they have criticized both security services, that they used excessive force, but also that organizers made the situation worse by having people with guns within the crowd. Have you seen that report? Are you satisfied?

MS. PSAKI: I haven't seen it. I would point you to the fact that we released our own Human Rights Report just last week which certainly had a section on Egypt, and that outlines what the U.S. Government position is.

QUESTION: Do you feel that the situation was exacerbated by gunmen within the square as well as by police?

MS. PSAKI: Again, I would point you to the – our own Human Rights Report that we released just a week ago.

March 4, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: General Sisi has dropped a pretty broad hint that he plans to run for president, saying in an interview with the Middle East News Agency that he could not “turn his back on calls by the majority of Egyptians for him to run for president.” Is that a good idea for the country’s current military ruler to run for president?

MS. PSAKI: Well, Arshad, he hasn’t announced he’s running for president. As you know, we support a process in Egypt. As we’ve said before, we don’t support any particular candidate in Egypt’s presidential election. It’s up to the Egyptian people to select their next leader, so I hesitate to say. We probably will have very little to say even when there are declared candidates, but beyond that, I don’t have any more comment on his remarks.

QUESTION: Can we stay on Egypt?

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: So you’re aware of this little firestorm – or maybe not so little – about the situation involving Medea Benjamin, who is the co-founder or founder of Code Pink --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- being detained at the airport in Cairo? She has made several claims in interviews that both she and her supporters tried frantically to get in touch with people from the Embassy and that no one came, no – or no one helped, both – while she was being abused, beaten up by Egyptian security officials and then deported to Turkey. What can you say about that? Did the Embassy respond to requests for – her request for assistance?

MS. PSAKI: Well, our consular officers in Egypt were in contact with the U.S. citizen and provided all appropriate consular assistance. We, of course – due to privacy considerations, we can’t provide additional details. But I can assure you that our consular officers in Egypt did provide all of the assistance necessary.

QUESTION: Well, can – all of the assistance necessary? So what --

MS. PSAKI: All of the assistance --

QUESTION: What did they do?

MS. PSAKI: All of the appropriate consular assistance.

QUESTION: What --

QUESTION: What did they do?

QUESTION: Okay, so what --

MS. PSAKI: I don't have anything to outline further. Obviously, there are a range of duties or a range of steps that are taken, but I can check with our team and see if there's more we can provide to all of you.

QUESTION: Okay. And you're saying that she -- that there is -- you do not have a Privacy Act waiver from her or authorized representative, which is why you cannot say more?

MS. PSAKI: Correct. Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Is that -- that is correct?

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: Okay. So in the meantime, even if she -- you were saying your side of the story or the Embassy's side of the story is that she was -- that there was contact between her and the consular officers and that they did provide all appropriate assistance.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: And you are unable to refute her allegation that that's -- that that didn't happen, that there was no contact, that she waited and waited and waited, and there was --

MS. PSAKI: Well, I --

QUESTION: There was no contact and no assistance --

MS. PSAKI: I think I refuted the fact that there was contact and assistance.

QUESTION: Yes, but you can't -- right. But you can't refute that with -- by saying exactly what they did because you don't have a Privacy Act waiver. Is that correct?

MS. PSAKI: I will -- let me check, Matt, and just see. I know -- I understand the interest, obviously. Let me see if there's more specific details I can provide --

QUESTION: Okay.

MS. PSAKI: -- about what we were able to do.

QUESTION: Right. But the – would the – what you were able to do be at all in any way affected by Ms. Benjamin's well-known political activism or her, at least, past antipathy to former Secretary of State Rice?

MS. PSAKI: In terms of what services we would provide?

QUESTION: In terms of what embassy officials would help her with, or would they ignore her pleas or her distress?

MS. PSAKI: Of course not. Of course not. We provide a broad range of assistance to people from a broad range of backgrounds.

QUESTION: Okay. So can you just check and see if there's more that is able --

MS. PSAKI: Sure, I'm happy to.

QUESTION: -- to be said, because this is kind of exploding up here on the --

MS. PSAKI: No, I understand. I understand. I'll see if there's more detail we can provide without a waiver.

QUESTION: Thank you.

February 27, 2014

**Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on Egypt
Washington, DC**

QUESTION: Okay. Well, as you know, some journalists, like 20 journalists, are being held in prisons inside Egypt. Four of Al Jazeera journalists are there.

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: What do you make of these practices by the Egyptian interim government? I mean, is this a government – these are practices by a government who will take Egypt into the road of democracy and human rights?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I appreciate your question, and I know that Al Jazeera is trying to do – to raise awareness about this important issue and the issue of media freedom in general, which we feel very strongly about. Of course, we remain deeply concerned about the ongoing lack of freedom of expression and press freedoms in Egypt. The government's targeting of journalists and others on questionable claims is wrong and demonstrates an egregious disregard for the protection of basic rights and freedoms. All journalists, regardless of affiliation, must not be targets of violence, intimidation, or politicized legal action. They must be protected and permitted to freely do their jobs in Egypt.

We are watching closely the trial of Al Jazeera staff and journalists in Egypt. We understand that the defendants pleaded not guilty at the February 20th proceedings, and that the trial was adjourned until March 5th. We've expressed these concerns directly to the Government of Egypt, and we have strongly urged the government to drop these charges and release those journalists and academics who have been detained. It is impossible for journalists to do their jobs if they are faced with questionable charges and are detained and on trial.

So again, we stress to the Egyptian Government publicly, and of course privately, as I mentioned, that freedom of the press is a cornerstone of democracy, and we urge the interim government to fulfill its commitment to this freedom.

February 25, 2014

**Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on Egypt
Washington, DC**

MS. PSAKI: Oh, Egypt. Sorry. Let's do Egypt and then we can go --

QUESTION: Same question than yesterday. Did you get an explanation on this surprise resignation? And I know you said yesterday that it's up to the Egyptian people to decide for the election, but would you welcome this expected presidential bid from Marshal al-Sisi?

MS. PSAKI: Well, again, knowing he has not announced, and I know we've been speculating a lot about it, of course, our position hasn't changed in that we are urging the new interim government, when that is created following this announcement, whatever the makeup is, to advance an inclusive transition process that leads to a democratic, civilian-led government selected through credible and transparent elections that protects the universal human rights that Egyptians have demanded.

We, of course, as I said yesterday, are continuing to closely watch the events in Egypt. The situation is, obviously, fluid on the ground, as it has been not just for months but for years, and is pretty common in democracies when they're in their new stages. And given the events over the last couple of years, we aren't going to offer play-by-play analysis of what it may mean. Our focus is going to remain on urging the interim government, when that is formed, to take those positive steps forward.

QUESTION: Sorry. Do you regard Egypt as a democracy in an early stage?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think we've talked about in the past --

QUESTION: Isn't it still a -- wasn't there a coup, and has there been elections since?

MS. PSAKI: There has not been an election.

QUESTION: Okay. So it's not yet a -- even nascent democracy.

MS. PSAKI: What I'm referring to, Matt, is the fact that, as you are very familiar with the history over the last couple of years and given we've been at this for over 200, we know that it takes some time to work through the kinks.

QUESTION: Has there been any conversations or any telephone calls between you or any U.S. officials with the Egyptians in the last 48 hours?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think I referenced yesterday the call that Secretary Hagel did this weekend with Defense Minister al-Sisi --

QUESTION: But that was before the resignation of the government.

MS. PSAKI: Sure. But our charge Marc Sievers is on the ground. Our Acting Deputy DCM David Ranz is on the ground. An entire team is on the ground. And of course, they remain in touch with a range of officials.

QUESTION: Okay. There has also been, I think, a government named or at least suggested by the Egyptians. Are you aware of that?

MS. PSAKI: I haven't seen -- I don't know if there was a new report out this morning. We certainly expect the next step is the creation, as they've said, of a new interim government.

QUESTION: So is the U.S.-Egyptian relationship now so estranged that there is no direct communication on what's going on?

MS. PSAKI: I think I just refuted that by conveying the strength of our team on the ground and repeating for you the fact that Secretary Hagel spoke with Defense Minister al-Sisi just a few days ago.

February 24, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson
Daily Press Briefing, Selections on Egypt
Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have some clarity or at least an explanation regarding the surprise resignation of the government today? And do you see that as a preparation ground for Marshal Sisi to contest the presidential election?

MS. PSAKI: Well, as you mentioned, Nicolas, this just happened today. We don't have details on the announcement that a new government will be named under a new prime minister. Obviously, we're watching it closely. We are reaching out to our Egyptian counterparts. Of course, this step was unexpected, so we're looking to obtain information on it.

Our focus, of course, remains on pressing and encouraging Egypt to take steps forward that will advance an inclusive transition process that leads to a democratic civilian-led government selected through a credible and transparent elections process. In terms of what it means, I know there have been a range of comments made on the ground, but we don't have any additional analysis from the United States Government.

QUESTION: So you don't see this as a prelude to Field Marshal Sisi running for president?

MS. PSAKI: Well, that announcement hasn't been made. Obviously, it's up to the people of Egypt to determine who will lead their country in the future, but I don't have any additional analysis on the meaning at this point.

QUESTION: Would you be annoyed if Field Marshal Sisi sort of nominated himself for elections and perhaps win?

MS. PSAKI: I'm not going to entertain that hypothetical question, and again, no announcement has been made at this point.

Go ahead.

QUESTION: Yes, please. Regarding this resignation of the government --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and your contacts -- what level of contact? Because if it's supposed to be your counterpart already resigned with the government, what kind of contacts you have?

MS. PSAKI: With officials in Egypt?

QUESTION: Yes.

MS. PSAKI: Well, over time we've been in touch with a broad range of officials both on the ground – you may have seen that Secretary Hagel spoke with Defense Minister al-Sisi this weekend, but our officials on the ground remain in close touch with a range of officials.

QUESTION: The other question is related to Secretary Kerry's response to one of the questions that when you were in Tunisia, I think.

MS. PSAKI: Okay.

QUESTION: And it's regarding his being in touch or his hope to go and visit Egypt. Is there any plan in this --

MS. PSAKI: I have no plans to announce. As you know, he was there last fall. And certainly he, just like every official in the United States Government, has a deep commitment to our longstanding relationship with Egypt, but I don't have any trip or plans to announce at this point.

QUESTION: The other question related, your contacts, because if for a while there is no ambassador there, as a matter of fact --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- and even the person was acting and he left the position. He is – somebody is in charge of his position or his duties. Is there any plan – I know just you may say it's coming from the White House, but --

MS. PSAKI: I may say that. You're right. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Is there any somehow to be in touch with the – I mean, there is a plan or something going on to appoint as a matter of fact because there is no ambassador and there is no consul general in Alexandria? I mean --

MS. PSAKI: Well, a couple pieces. I mean, we certainly still do have a senior team on the ground in Egypt, in Cairo. As you know, the former ambassador, we stole her for lack of a better term, to become the assistant secretary for NEA here. But there is a strong senior team on the ground now. On – in terms of Alexandria, I think you're confusing that as related to the Travel Alert that's been underway in Egypt, and specifically kind of where the efforts that have been underway to update some of the security in certain parts of the country.

QUESTION: So who's running the shop in the – at the U.S. Embassy? Is it David Satterfield? He left, I assume.

QUESTION: He left.

QUESTION: So who is in charge of the U.S. Embassy?

MS. PSAKI: We have a range of officials, Said, who are in charge. I'm happy to get you a list of our senior team in Egypt.

...

QUESTION: So who's running the shop in Egypt, then? I mean, who are you all dealing with?

MS. PSAKI: You mean in the Egyptian Government?

QUESTION: Yeah, exactly.

MS. PSAKI: Well, obviously, this announcement just happened today. And so we're still – we don't have any analysis at this point in terms of what it means and what steps will be undertaken. President Mansour, I believe, still is in place. There are some other officials that are still in place. It referred to the resignation of some cabinet officials, but in terms of what it means, we're still taking a look at that. And we have been in touch through this transition with a wide range of officials, given they're moving towards a democratic election and they're not quite there yet. So --

QUESTION: Okay.

...

QUESTION: Yeah. I mean, a few weeks ago there was a team from State Department went to UAE and Kuwait, I think, for the economic assistance --

MS. PSAKI: Mm-hmm.

QUESTION: -- or part of a package.

MS. PSAKI: Sure.

QUESTION: What's – I mean, what's – how – you have an update about this team?

MS. PSAKI: Well, it --

QUESTION: I mean, it's – at that time, I have some update, but I think one of the people, he went back to Abu Dhabi again. And do you have any update about it?

MS. PSAKI: I don't. I'm happy to check with our team and see. Obviously, there have been a range of consultations with neighboring countries that have a stake in the future of Egypt. But I will see if there's more we can provide on where things stand with that.

February 14, 2014

Marie Harf, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

QUESTION: Do you have any more information about the arrest of this employee at the Egyptian – at the U.S. Embassy in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Not a lot. It's my understanding that we still have not been given a reason from the Government of Egypt why he has been detained and continues to be detained. One follow-up that folks had asked, I think, yesterday – the Government of Egypt has never contacted the Embassy discouraging us from meeting with members of the Muslim Brotherhood. That's a question I think I took yesterday. I just wanted to make sure whoever asked it actually got an answer. But again, nothing – no charges have been filed to our knowledge, and nothing new in terms of what – why he's been arrested.

QUESTION: But again, given the fact that at least, albeit anonymously, Egyptian officials are saying that this in response to his communications with the Muslim Brotherhood as a liaison for the U.S., does that give you --

MS. HARF: I haven't seen any anonymous official call out the Muslim Brotherhood. I've seen them talk about working with groups.

QUESTION: Okay, working with groups. But does that --

MS. HARF: Well, I mean --

QUESTION: -- does that give you – does that make you concerned about your diplomats and your – do you think that this is an implicit warning and are you nervous?

MS. HARF: I don't know if I would take it that far. What we've said – and sort of generalize it to our folks – what we've said are two things – that they need to tell us why he's been detained, and they need to say so publicly, officially. And the second is that we have been concerned about the climate in general in Egypt for political discourse and discussion based on a lot of the things the Egyptian Government itself has done. So --

QUESTION: Have you instructed your Foreign Service nationals not to have communications with the Muslim Brotherhood while this has been worked out?

MS. HARF: Not to my knowledge. I don't believe so. We've said we'll continue working with them.

QUESTION: Including with Foreign Service nationals?

MS. HARF: That's my understanding. If it's different, I will – happy to let you know. But I don't think it is.

QUESTION: I mean, but won't this have a chilling effect for the Foreign Service nationals who are working for the United States in some of these conditions where they think that they can be arrested, detained, held indefinitely without charges, and just for doing their job basically?

MS. HARF: Well, again, we're not sure – I mean, we all have speculation on why we think he was detained and remains in detention without charges being filed, but that's why we've said very clearly they need to tell us why, because we do have suspicions, and we don't want it to have a chilling effect, absolutely.

QUESTION: What are they telling you why they won't provide that answer?

MS. HARF: I'm not sure they're telling us why they won't provide the answer. I'm not sure. I just don't think we've gotten an answer.

QUESTION: Is this being done just through the embassy or senior levels in this building?

MS. HARF: It's definitely being done through the embassy. I'm not sure if folks in this building have been engaged as well. I am happy to check.

QUESTION: Marie?

MS. HARF: Yes.

QUESTION: On Egypt, how do you --

MS. HARF: You're moving around.

QUESTION: Yeah, I went out and came back.

MS. HARF: You're mixing it up here. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: How did you feel when President Putin announced that Marshall Sisi will be running for election in Egypt?

MS. HARF: Well, I think I addressed this yesterday when I said it's --

QUESTION: Yeah, but your feeling?

MS. HARF: I don't think anyone cares what my feelings are. (Laughter.)

QUESTION: Not your, personally, the State Department's

MS. HARF: By personal – I don't have very strong personal feelings about anything Vladimir Putin does probably. But generally, look, it's not up for President Putin, it's not up to the United States, it's not up to anyone outside of Egypt to say who should be the next leader of Egypt. It's up to the Egyptian people. And that's been our position throughout, and certainly our position in response to his comments.

January 29, 2014

Jen Psaki, Spokesperson

Daily Press Briefing, selections on Egypt

Washington, DC

MS. PSAKI: ...I also wanted to note that we remain deeply concerned about the ongoing lack of freedom of expression and press freedom in Egypt. The government's targeting of journalists and others on spurious claims is wrong and demonstrates an egregious disregard for the protection of basic rights and freedoms. We remind Egypt's interim government of the need to permit an atmosphere that enables rights and freedoms to be exercised by all Egyptians without fear of intimidation, repercussion, and detention. This is essential for any sustainable transition.

Let me be clear that the United States places great freedom on a free – great value on a free press. We are alarmed by reports today of additional journalists facing charges, including the Al Jazeera journalists. Any journalist, regardless of affiliation, must not be targets of violence, intimidation, or politicized legal action. They must be protected and permitted to freely do their jobs in Egypt. We remind the Egyptian Government publicly and privately that freedom of the press is a cornerstone of democracy and we urge the interim government to implement its commitment to this freedom. We strongly urge the government to reconsider detaining and trying these journalists, and reiterate that they must be afforded all accordance of the due process under the rule of law.

Later

QUESTION: I want to go back to your opening on – second opening statement on --

MS. PSAKI: On Egypt?

QUESTION: -- Egypt, yeah, which was really kind of – quite tough after, at least, I think, some relative period of almost silence on the situation there, except for bending over backwards to say that you don't support this or that candidate to be – to run for president.

MS. PSAKI: I did talk very briefly on Monday – very briefly – about our concern about the detainment of journalists, but this --

QUESTION: Okay. Well, can I just ask why today did you decide to really lower the boom with calling this egregious violations and plain, flat-out wrong? What was it that prompted this?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think this is an issue anywhere in the world, but certainly in Egypt, as is applicable now, that we have been concerned about the events building over the past several weeks. We felt it was important to highlight them and express our concern about the treatment of

journalists and our belief that freedom of the media and freedom of press is something that should be respected and valued. So it was important for us to get that message out.

QUESTION: Do your concerns about the treatment of journalists extend beyond just the treatment of journalists and freedom of the press? Are there other things in the second transition to democracy that you're concerned about in Egypt that you would care to speak so bluntly about today?

MS. PSAKI: Well, I think – I mean, I can outline what our concerns have been, if that's helpful, and we express those as they come up.

QUESTION: Right, okay. So it's just – we shouldn't read into this that today, you're only concerned about the treatment of journalists? There's still a lot of other --

MS. PSAKI: That is not what I was stating, and we were --

QUESTION: Oh, no, no, no, I know.

MS. PSAKI: Yeah.

QUESTION: But there's still a lot of other concerns that you do have about what's going on.

MS. PSAKI: Absolutely, and what – the reason that I did that at the top is because we felt strongly that this is an issue that should receive more attention and that we've been especially concerned about in recent weeks.

QUESTION: Journalists in particular, or the crackdown of all democratic institutions --

MS. PSAKI: Well, we've --

QUESTION: -- including political opposition --

MS. PSAKI: But to be fair, we expressed the concern about crackdown and have on a number of occasions. This has been – there have been recent arrests of journalists and treatment of journalists that we just wanted to highlight. That's the reason that I raised it.

QUESTION: And so do you regard this as not – as backsliding and more than just in this particular area today, that you're seeing Egypt right now in the – going in the wrong direction? Is that correct?

MS. PSAKI: Well, certainly, the detainment of journalists and the treatment is something that we were concerned enough about to raise it here publicly.

QUESTION: So does this usher in your – I mean, your blunt language, does this usher in a new era or a new attitude towards the Government of Egypt, that it will be held accountable and not get a pass, I mean, to use my word the other day in my question on this?

MS. PSAKI: I don't think anybody thinks they're getting a pass. I think we expressed --

QUESTION: Well, they thought so. I think they did.

MS. PSAKI: I think we – let me finish. We express concerns when we have them. We highlight events that are happening when we see there's a reason to do that, and this was an example of that.

QUESTION: And how would this be translated on the ground, let's say, in terms of reassuring all oppositions, including the Muslim Brotherhood, that they can be part of a political process in the future, and the United States will stand on its principles towards the right of the opposition to be a part of any political arrangement?

MS. PSAKI: I think we've talked about inclusivity quite a bit. I was just highlighting the treatment of journalists because we felt it was important to shine a light on how concerned we were about that.