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S. RES. 372

Recognizing the importance of the United States-Egypt relationship, and urging the Government of Egypt to protect civil liberties and cease intimidation and prosecution of civil society workers and democracy activists, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

FEBRUARY 14, 2012

Mr. KERRY (for himself, Mr. INHOFE, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. DURBIN) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations

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RESOLUTION

Recognizing the importance of the United States-Egypt relationship, and urging the Government of Egypt to protect civil liberties and cease intimidation and prosecution of civil society workers and democracy activists, and for other purposes.

Whereas the Governments and people of the United States and Egypt enjoy a long history of a strong strategic partnership;

Whereas the United States Government seeks to maintain robust bilateral relations with the Government and people of Egypt so that they may continue to work together toward our shared goals of peace, security, and economic prosperity in Egypt and the region;

Whereas, on February 11, 2011, peaceful mass protests succeeded in bringing an end to the authoritarian rule of Hosni Mubarak;

Whereas the United States Government and the international community stood by the people of Egypt as they began to undertake their transition to a democracy;

Whereas there have been numerous clashes between security personnel and protesters, including Egyptians who were calling for a swifter transition to civilian-led rule;

Whereas, on November 28 and 29, 2011, the first of three rounds of parliamentary elections began in Egypt, which have been deemed largely free and fair by civil society observers and monitors;

Whereas United States-based organizations such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, Freedom House, and the International Center for Journalists were in Egypt to support and promote democratic activity, including elections, adherence to the rule of law, and the existence of a free press;

Whereas certain of those organizations had been operating openly in Egypt for many years, had long sought formal registration and had never received rejections of their applications, had exhibited an unprecedented level of transparency, and had only recently become the targets of malicious reporting by state-run media in Egypt;

Whereas, on December 29, 2011, the Government of Egypt raided the offices of the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, Freedom House, the International Center for Journalists, and several other Egyptian and international civil society organiza-

tions in Egypt, confiscating their property and equipment;

Whereas the Government of Egypt announced that it would launch investigations into hundreds of civil society organizations, has targeted and interrogated staff of these organizations, and has imposed restrictions on the movement of United States citizens who are staff members of these organizations, including placing them on a ''no-fly'' list to prohibit departure from the country;

Whereas, on February 5, 2012, the Government of Egypt announced that it would refer for arrest more than 40 staff members of various nongovernmental organizations, among them 16 United States citizens, including staff of the United States-based National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, Freedom House, the International Center for Journalists, and Germany-based Konrad Adenauer Stiftung;

Whereas in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2012 (Public Law 112–74), Congress conditioned economic and military assistance to Egypt on the Secretary of State's certification that Egypt is meeting its obligations under the 1979 Peace Treaty with Israel and that it is supporting the transition to a civilian government, including by holding free and fair elections and protecting freedoms of expression, association, and religion and due process of law;

Whereas Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has stated that the United States Government has ''deep concerns about what is happening to our NGOs, and Americans and others who work for them. . . . We do not believe there is any basis for these investigations, these raids on the sites that the NGOs operate out of, the seizure of their equip-

ment, and certainly no basis for prohibiting the exit from the country by individuals who have been working with our NGOs.'';

Whereas restricting the space for civil society engagement dishonors the promise of the Egyptian revolution and could potentially damage the country's transition to democracy; and

Whereas, according to Secretary of State Clinton, ''We have worked very hard the last year to put into place financial assistance and other support for the economic and political reforms that are occurring in Egypt, and we will have to closely review these matters as it comes time for us to certify whether or not any of these funds from our government can be made available under these circumstances.'': Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) acknowledges the central and historic importance of the United States-Egyptian strategic partnership in advancing the common interests of both countries, including peace and security in the broader Middle East and North Africa;

(2) reiterates its support for the people of Egypt during a difficult political transition towards a more representative and responsive democratic government;

(3) praises the work that United States democracy promotion organizations such as the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican

Institute, Freedom House, and the International Center for Journalists, do internationally to strengthen civic institutions, democratic practice, political parties, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and protections for independent media;

(4) reaffirms the commitment of the Government and people of the United States to universal rights of freedom of expression, religion, assembly, and association, including Internet freedom;

(5) notes the critical role civil society plays in democratic societies and applauds the work of democracy promotion, human rights, and developmental organizations in Egypt;

(6) expresses deep concern at the intimidation and media manipulation against democracy activists and Egyptian and international civil society organizations in Egypt;

(7) urges the Government of Egypt to protect civil liberties for all citizens, embrace transparency and accountability, and promote the creation of a vibrant civil society;

(8) calls upon the Government of Egypt to immediately cease its intimidation and prosecution of civil society workers and democracy activists of all nationalities in Egypt, including Egyptians, and to

allow non-Egyptian civil society workers to voluntarily leave the country; and

(9) calls on the Government of Egypt to halt harassment, including that conducted via state media, of democracy and human rights activists in Egypt.

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