

Rebuttal reinforced my point

Written by Neil Davis

Thursday, 07 July 2011 13:35 -

In my June 22 letter I wrote about the Bush administration's handling of funding for democracy promotion and civil society groups in Egypt. The writer of a June 29 letter quoted, "The Government of Egypt has resisted USAID/Egypt's democracy and governance program..." and "Per the Egyptian government's complaints, the U.S. now limits its funding to NGOs registered with the (Egyptian) government, therefore excluding most human rights groups..." They wrote, "Most times there are two sides to a story."

I fail to see how this added information is another side of the story. It only reinforces my point that (as perhaps the weakest president we have ever had) Obama didn't want that fight and cut funding for the people of Egypt. I was under the impression that Democrats are the "party of the people." Obama helped bring about the likelihood that radicals (Muslim Brotherhood) will come to power there. He seems to have no problem funding whatever government that might bring. Will they keep the Suez Canal open?

Bush was under the same pressure from the Egyptian government, but had the determination to go around President Mubarak, who I wrote, was no humanitarian toward his people. From a Washington Post article: "The George W. Bush administration tried to change the dynamic regarding civil society funding, though its effort met with fierce resistance by the Egyptian government." and "The Bush administration's effort was also backed by Congress, which...directed that assistance shall not be subject to the prior approval by the government of any foreign country."

In the same article: "Toward the end of Bush's term, his fiscal year 2009 budget proposed spending \$45 million on democracy and good-governance programs...\$20 million on promoting civil society...the same as 2008." and "A 2009 audit of Egyptian aid by the USAID inspector general found that the results of the U.S. government's democracy effort were mixed, though the greatest success was achieved in programs funded directly by the United States." Since we were already giving them money, it seems to me that Bush's policy was more effective (and less harmful).

The writer found it ironic that Republican tea partiers are against funding socialism in our country, "but don't seem to mind the aid that goes to foreign countries." First of all, tea partiers are not exclusively Republican. Many are also Libertarians and fiscal Democrats. Secondly, the broad statement about foreign aid shows ignorance of tea party views. Many oppose involvement in foreign ventures, e.g. presidential candidate Ron Paul. Nothing in my letter implied that I was for or against the funding. I wrote, "at least there was peace." But, there was

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also corruption and suffering.

Bruce K. Rutherford, author of "Egypt After Mubarak," commented on Obama's cuts in contrast to his Cairo speech. "There was the perception that he did the opposite of what he said he would do and there is anger and disillusionment at the U.S. and Obama in general among almost everyone I talk to in Egypt." Thanks Barry!

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