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**From:** Anne-Marie Slaughter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 2, 2011 2:12 PM  
**To:** H  
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**Subject:** one more to read on Egypt

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This is very close to the piece I have been contemplating writing on why I think we are heading in a bad direction on Egypt. Marc Lynch and Steven Cooke are two of the most thoughtful and knowledgeable analysts around, in my view. Note their positive proposal that we should issue a strong statement spelling out exactly what a transition to civilian government means, and do it now when the regime is probably breathing a sigh of relief and thinking that it dodged a bullet. Until they release the thousands of protesters they have detained, they are not serious about any kind of real civilian rule.

FROM THE NYT ON LINE.

OP-ED CONTRIBUTOR

## U.S. Policy on Egypt Needs a Big Shift

By MARC LYNCH AND STEVEN A. COOK

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Egyptians lined up this week to vote in the first Parliamentary elections since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak. The high turnout in a peaceful, orderly election contrasted sharply with the violence and chaos of the previous week, when hundreds of thousands returned to Tahrir Square after security forces killed at least 42 people and left 3,000 injured. But Washington should not be fooled by the peace that has returned to Egyptian streets. Even successful elections can not erase months of political mismanagement by the ruling Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (S.C.A.F.) or the bloodshed committed under its auspices.

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The U.S. State Department condemned the violence in Tahrir, and has called on the S.C.A.F. to transfer power to civilians as soon as possible. That is a good start, but is not enough. Egypt's military rulers clearly believe that they have survived the political crisis, and have resisted calls for a more fundamental political change. The generals may prevail in the short term, as the numbers in Tahrir dwindle and Egyptians turn their attention back to the elections and political squabbles.

Still, the violence last week demonstrates that the S.C.A.F.'s leadership has created the conditions under which even small problems and challenges can spark massive instability. And it has shown that Washington's present approach to Egypt, which has placed a premium on private diplomacy at the expense of public pressure, must change.

Overall, the Obama administration has done better with Egypt than most critics recognize. It has sought to shape the generals' behavior by praising them in public while quietly pushing them from behind the scenes. This approach has sometimes worked, but it has lowered America's status in the eyes of many Egyptians. Few Egyptians (or Americans) know what motivates U.S. policy toward Egypt or what it has done. Most revolutionaries assume that Obama is conspiring with the generals against them.

Until this week, arguments could be made either way on the balance between private influence and public pressure. Yet the unacceptable, systematic violence in Tahrir Square and the ratcheting repression across the country against protesters, journalists and foreigners changes that equation. The U.S. was virtually silent as dozens of Egyptians died and tons of U.S.-made tear gas bombarded Tahrir Square. Only after a few days did it muster a demand for restraint on both sides — which caused outrage among peaceful protesters — and a call for free and fair elections. Washington has toughened its language in recent days, including a White House statement calling on the S.C.A.F. to transfer power to a civilian government “as soon as possible.” But few Egyptians even noticed.

This cautious, passive response has done considerable damage to President Obama's admirable efforts to place the United States on the side of Arabs who want to live in democratic societies. It is time for the Obama administration to rise to the moment, recognize that Egypt's transition is at stake, and shift its focus.

The events of the last week demonstrate that the military is quite capable by its own machinations and miscalculations of fostering the instability that U.S. officials seem to fear most. Yet the S.C.A.F.'s actions are not the only compelling reason for a policy change.

The administration has articulated a new standard of legitimacy in its responses to Libya and Syria, among other countries, that leaders who use violence against their own people forfeit their standing to rule. Although Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi and his officers are hardly in the same category as Muammar el-Qaddafi and Bashar al-Assad, the same standard should apply to Egypt.

The Obama administration's response should begin with a clear, public presidential statement specifying what transferring power to a civilian government means. This would not involve micromanaging Egyptian politics in a manner that risks a nationalist backlash in Egypt, but Washington should put the Egyptian

military, which receives \$1.3 billion annually from the United States, on notice that the officer's efforts to carve out a post-transition political role for themselves is unacceptable.

In addition, Washington should now throw its weight behind early presidential elections, a demand shared by virtually all Egyptian political forces and which the S.C.A.F. recently agreed to under pressure. It should also insist on a rapid response to the long-standing demand to end the military trials for civilians and the application of emergency law, which makes those trials and other means of repression possible. It should speak out against recent moves to censor the media and to incite citizens against protesters and foreign journalists. And, crucially, the administration should demand real accountability for those responsible for violence against civilians.

Egypt is now entering months of elections that hold out the promise of delivering the democratic system that Egyptians want and deserve. Now is the time for Washington to push Egypt's military leaders to make the political changes needed to deliver on that hope.

**Marc Lynch** is an associate professor of political science at George Washington University. **Steven A. Cook** is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations.