



The United States and Strained Relations between Iran- Egypt (1357-1400)

Habib Sasani¹
Alireza Rezaei² 
Ghasem Toraby³ 

1-Introduction

Iran and Egypt, two historically significant nations in the Islamic world, have experienced complex and often strained relations influenced by the dynamics of great power politics. Now, the relationship between the two countries is currently shrouded in uncertainty. This complexity and unresolved crisis in relations between the two countries has attracted the attention of many researchers of Regional and international studies. Factors such as the Islamic Revolution, Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, and the Iran-Iraq War have all contributed to the deterioration of relations between the two nations. However, the influence of great powers, particularly the United States, in perpetuating this decline is particularly significant. The United States operates as a third party in the dynamics of the Middle East, seeking to shape relationships among regional actors in a way that maximizes its own interests. Depending on the prevailing international system-whether it is bipolar or multipolar- certain actors, such as the United States, may seek to minimize the likelihood of regional convergence and the transformation into a regional security complex. They do this by attempting to align the interests of regional actors with their own international objectives. This alignment often hampers the potential for regional cooperation and the development of a security complex. This study aims to investigate the specific role of the U.S. in deteriorating relations between Iran and Egypt .It is hypothesized that the U.S.,

¹ PhD student of international relations, Hamedan branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran. egyptstudies@yahoo.com

² Associate Professor, Department of International Relations, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran. ir.alirezarezaei@gmail.com

³ Associate Professor of International Relations and Faculty Member, Hamedan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Hamedan, Iran. ghasemtoraby@yahoo.com



through direct and indirect influence on Egyptian political decision-making, has contributed to the persistent tensions between the two countries.

2- Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This article employs a descriptive-analytical method to explore the role of the United States in deteriorating of relations between Iran and Egypt, which in turn hampers regional convergence in the Middle East. To elucidate this role, the study adopts constructivist theory, which highlights both material interests and ideological factors, thereby facilitating a comprehensive analysis of the events influencing relations between Iran and Egypt.

3- Discussion

This study aims to explore the reasons behind the United States' success in creating divergence between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Egypt, as well its consolidation through various domestic and international factors.

3-1-Identity Concepts between Iran and Egypt

The most significant identity conflict between Iran and Egypt centers around the Palestinian issue, which has evolved in various ways before and after the Iranian Revolution.

The first point of contention emerged when Gamal Abdel Nasser came to power in Egypt in 1952 through a coup d'état. This event facilitated the Shah of Iran's alliance with the Zionist regime, resulting in a severance of diplomatic relations between Iran and Egypt.

The second aspect of this identity crisis, rooted in the Palestinian issue, was further complicated by the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The success of the revolution and Iran's subsequent shift in foreign policy, including its opposition to the Camp David Accords, strained relations with Egypt. Imam Khomeini's letter to President Sadat expressing disapproval of the accords further intensified the gap. Additionally, the visit of the deposed Shah of Iran to Egypt led to a complete breakdown of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Another layer of the identity conflict between Iran and Egypt can be examined through the perspectives of Arab nationalism and Iranian

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nationalism. The historical dichotomy of Arab versus non-Arab identities has deep roots and this complicated the relations between the two nations.

3-2-Objective and Aligned Interests Between Egypt and the United States

The nuclear issue represents a significant area of aligned interests between Egypt and the United States, fostering cooperation between the two nations and creating a basis for their divergence from Iran. Iran's pursuit of nuclear capabilities poses a potential threat to Israel, which is why both Egypt and the U.S. oppose this development. Consequently, this shared stance highlights Egypt and America's commitment to curbing Iranian influence in the region.

The second example of US interference in Iran-Egypt relations involves the sabotage of a balanced regional coalition. A partnership between Iran and Egypt could have enabled these two major regional powers to establish a form of balance in the Middle East. However, the U.S. views the formation of an alliance between Iran and Egypt as contrary to its interests in the region and as a potential threat to Israel's security. Consequently, from the outset, U.S. regional policy has aimed to prevent such a coalition and to inhibit the development of political ties between Iran and Egypt. This strategy persists through the promotion of Iranophobia and the exaggeration of Iran's threat to Arab nations in the region, including Egypt. Ultimately, the fear of a regional balance is a significant factor in pressuring Egypt to refrain from joining this coalition and to avoid establishing relations with Iran.

The third root of the divergence between Iran and Egypt lies in the US-Egyptian rhetoric during their negotiations, which perpetuates the divide between the two countries. As a significant international actor capable of influencing Egyptian decisions, the United States, through its aid to Egypt, expects the country to adopt a firm stance against Iranian influence and to curb the expansion of Iran's military presence in the region.

4- Conclusion and Suggestions

Two groups of internal and external factors contribute to the ongoing divergence between Iran and Egypt, fostering an unfriendly and hostile

identity between the two nations. Both countries struggled to establish stable relations during the era of the second Pahlavi dynasty and throughout the Islamic Revolution. In the post-Islamic Revolution period, the United States has played a pivotal role in perpetuating this hostile identity. This ongoing tension can be attributed to several factors, including the Palestinian issue, Egypt's internal economic crisis, its reliance on American support, and widespread Iranophobia.

To foster more stable relations, cultural and scientific exchanges should be prioritized, followed by economic and industrial collaboration that addresses Egypt's domestic needs and reduces its reliance on the United States.

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