

On The New Vision for the Egyptian Foreign Policy After the Revolution

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PROGRAMME

Since its inception, and inspired by the principles of the great Egyptian Revolution of liberty, human dignity, and social justice, the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) recognizes the importance of laying the foundation for a free and prosperous Egypt after decades of authoritarianism and corruption. Our primary objective is to establish a democratic society that respects the rule of law in which citizens have the freedom to choose their own government and representatives. At the heart of our democracy lie our values, faith, and Islamic reference, which we strongly believe are compatible. We are striving to establish a free society, where citizens have equal rights, where women are treated with respect, and have equal access to education, jobs, and politics. A society where Copts, Jews and atheists live side by side in peace with equal citizenship rights. A society where domestic political and social conflicts can be resolved through the culture of cooperation and peaceful engagement, which is the culture our party is adapting today in approaching Egypt's impediments to a democratic society.

Egypt's roadmap to a viable democracy is marked by milestones. At the foremost was drafting the country's first modern constitution after the revolution, which won the confidence of the majority of Egyptians in a free and transparent referendum. In a few months, the Egyptian people will march again to the polls to elect their House of Representatives, which is expected to oversee a new government to fulfill the demands of the revolution and ambitions of

the Egyptian people.

However, for democracy to succeed and thrive, it requires a strong economy to sustain the needs of its ordinary citizens and provide the state with the ability to maintain social order and stability. FJP economic platform promotes free market economy, but not on the expense of social justice and the rights of the working class. The FJP believes in sound economic policies that fight corruption and build strong private sector as the main driving force behind a thriving economy, while the state provides the legal and political framework for a healthy business environment. The emphasis on the role of the private sector does not mean concentration of the country's wealth in the hands of very few people; the way things used to be before the revolution. It is our aspiration to empower millions of Egyptians to get into the domain of entrepreneurship; playing a pivotal role in driving the prosperity of their country.

We are seeking equal economic relations and partnership with the rest of the world, especially superpowers, but independent of the inequality of political realities in the region. Egypt should handle foreign aid with national pride and will refuse any meddling of its domestic affairs under the pretext of aid and assistance programs. In an era of interdependent economy, we believe a state must be able to retain its sovereignty in implementing its actual economic policies through own state institutions. It is vital to take into consideration its unique cultural identity,

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religious traditions, and value systems; especially in conservative nations across the Middle East. Also, there should be no political pressure exerted in that area.

The definition of the new foreign policy requires the determination of the overall picture we aspire to achieve within the next twenty years. This can be visualized through three principal dimensions for the position of Egypt on the international arena to be: a) a state with a regional leadership and a special international status; b) a state with a distinguished civilization model; and c) a state that makes the empowerment of the Egyptian citizen one of its major goals (which is a new important dimension for the role of foreign policy in Egypt, particularly needed as a direct fruit of the 25th of January revolution).

Based on the above vision, four major objectives can be set for the movement of the Egyptian foreign policy within the following two years:

- 1) support of the internal growth and providing leeway out of the current economic crisis;
- 2) preservation of the national security of Egypt;
- 3) achievement of balance, independence, and political impact in foreign relations; and
- 4) introduction of the Egyptian civilization project as a humanitarian model, through which leadership could be achieved.

Under Mubarak's regime, Egypt suffered a significant decline in its traditional role in Arab, regional, and international affairs. Moreover, our country was limited to marginal mediator roles or to following other countries' policies by risking our national security and regional stability. Under the current regime, Egypt's foreign policy is no longer dictated by one individual, but rather through an active participation of all state institutions, as well as all societal components/ stakeholders. Thus, each have a shared role in shaping Egypt's international vision and its implementation on the ground. Inspired by the democratic transformation triggered by the January 25th revolution, the popular will should

also be the determining factor of Egyptian foreign policy. The Egyptian people are the protectors of the revolution and our country's foreign affairs should support their goals for Egypt's domestic development.

Today, our foreign policy is aimed at restoring Egypt's leading role in the region and balancing its international relations with the rest of the world based on mutual interests, and appreciation of our differences and diversity; not in lieu of dependency and domination.

Furthermore, FJP believes that Egypt must restore the moral dimension in its foreign policies and must leverage its great geographical, historical, cultural, and political heritage to regain the privileged position it deserves. We can no longer afford to ignore human rights violations and atrocities by state and non-state actors that threaten world peace. Regional security is paramount to Egypt's national security, stability, and development. It's through the lens of justice, human rights, and economic development that Egypt views the world today. We aspire to collaborate with others to achieve a better picture for the world, to be more just, safe, and stable.

We realize that in an era of globalization, while cooperation in world politics is particularly difficult, international coordination of policy seems highly beneficial in an interdependent economy. However, what we are seeking is a symmetrical interdependent world economy, where countries can share joined benefits and losses, not hegemonic control and exploitation of mini states by superpowers.

Egypt's new foreign policy should also respect the principles and norms developed by the international community to resolve and settle conflicts among nations - particularly with regard to agreements of nonaggression and the unlawfulness of territorial gains from war. The Geneva Conventions, which protect civilians and prisoners during wars, as well as other

safeguards that criminalize aggression, are consistent with the principles of Islamic sharia and should be an integral part of Egyptian foreign policy. Egypt will continue to respect the conventions and treaties it has signed with all other nations. It will also ensure that these agreements serve the interests of all signatory parties and that their terms are strictly adhered to. In this context, we stress the need to support the Palestinian people to obtain all their legitimate rights.

Upholding our international obligations, while defending Palestinian rights, including an independent and sovereign state in accordance with UN resolutions, and ending aggression and violations of international law, will be the hallmark of our new foreign policy in the region. FJP will not condone any action that leads to increased suffering by the Palestinians, will work to improve their humanitarian conditions, and secure their legitimate rights.

Palestinian reconciliation and unity is paramount to any meaningful resolution of the Middle East peace process, and Egypt is leading the efforts and working diligently to achieve this goal. We value Turkey's international efforts to ease up the human suffering in Palestine, especially the besieged people in Gaza. Working alongside Egypt and the international community, we can compel Israel to end its occupation to Palestinian lands, stop illegal settlements, and honor international agreements.

FJP is committed to fulfilling demands of the Syrian people to live in freedom, and supports their revolution against the brutal regime of Bashar Al Assad. Egypt and Turkey are playing a major role in reaching a solution to the Syrian crisis, and ensure international and regional support for the National Coalition for Syrian Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. Military intervention in Syria will lead to the breakdown of Syria and undermine its integrity, and should not be an option. International pressure must be

exerted on the Assad regime to relinquish power and end the savage slaughtering of its own people.

Under the Freedom and Justice Party, Egypt places substantial importance on Turkey in its foreign policy. Having identical foreign policy goals, Egypt and Turkey are expected to join hands to promote peace in this volatile region. Together, the two countries' population of more than 160 million constitute about half of the Middle East populace. With their collaboration, sky would be the limit. The two countries can achieve great advancements in maintaining peace and stability in the region, and they can synergize their efforts for conflict resolution all over the world. There is also a great potential for collaboration as Egypt can act as a land bridge linking Turkey with Africa and The Gulf area, while Turkey can act the same for Egypt to Europe.

Egyptians do appreciate the support provided by both the Turkish Government and the Turkish people after the revolution. Prime Minister Erdogan was the first world leader who publicly called for the former President Mubarak to step down following massive Egyptian protests. President Gul was the first world president who visited Egypt right after the revolution. On the economic level, not a single Turkish factory of the 150 operating in Egypt at the time of the revolution left the country, although some Egyptian ones did close.

We believe that the spirit prevailing in Egypt since the January 25th revolution - which has already led to serious steps on the road to democratization, the termination of military rule, having a democratically elected president, drafting of the new constitution, and moving towards parliamentary elections - can also inform Egypt's new foreign policy. All these advancements will help us move forward confidently in recapturing Egypt's rightful place in the world and will bring the benefits of stability and prosperity to all its citizens.



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The Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) is an independent non-governmental think-tank, analyzing Turkey's most pressing social, cultural, political and economic issues. Based in Istanbul, TESEV was founded in 1994 to serve as a bridge between academic research and the policy-making process in Turkey by opening new channels for policy-oriented dialogue and research.

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