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January 3, 2012

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State
2201 C St NW Ste 7276
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

I write to express my grave concern about news reports last week indicating that the offices of nearly a dozen non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Egypt, including the International Republican Institute (IRI), the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and Freedom House, were raided, their equipment and files confiscated, their staff temporarily detained and their operations shuttered.

It is my understanding that the offices of these organizations remain involuntarily closed – their important work indefinitely suspended – despite reported assurances by Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, head of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF), and other Egyptian officials, that the raids would cease, the equipment would be returned and the organizations would be permitted to resume operations.

A January 1, *New York Times* article reported, "Egypt's continued support of the raids is also the latest indication that the military rulers who took over after the ouster of former President Hosni Mubarak share his government's dim view of the international norms of democracy and human rights."

A "dim view" indeed, and one which should have consequences. I serve on the House Appropriations subcommittee which controls foreign assistance, including the $1.3 billion annually that the U.S. government provides to the Egyptian military. As you know, in the recently passed appropriations bill, Congress included language expressly requiring the State Department, prior to obligating any funds, to certify that the "Government of Egypt is supporting the transition to civilian government including holding free and fair elections; implementing policies to protect freedom of expression, association, and religion, and due process of law."

These recent actions by the Egyptian government are a clear violation of the conditions that Congress laid out and as such should have a direct bearing on aid to Egypt, until the situation is rectified. Further, if similar assaults on civil society and religious freedom occur in the future, aid should be indefinitely halted. Using our leverage to press for a truly free, democratic and pluralistic Egypt is not only the right thing to do, it is in U.S. national interests.

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When I visited Egypt last June following the revolution I encountered a variety of perspectives – some had incredible hope for what the future might hold in post-Mubarak Egypt, while others, including some democracy activists and most religious freedom advocates, were pessimistic about the transition and the prospects for a free, tolerant, and democratic government after elections. Increasingly it seems their pessimism was well-founded.

This administration, at every possible level, must actively engage with the Egyptian government and make it abundantly clear that these actions will not be tolerated, that the narrative the Egyptian government is espousing about the work of these organizations is patently false, and that the U.S. is unapologetic in the promotion of basic liberties around the world, including Egypt.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

cc: Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta
Ambassador Anne Patterson