

Foreign Relations of the Arab Republic of Egypt

Overview:

Foreign relations of the Arab Republic of Egypt are the Egyptian government's external relations with the outside world. Egypt's foreign policy operates along a non-aligned level. Factors such as population size, historical events, military strength, diplomatic expertise and a strategic geographical position give Egypt extensive political influence in the Middle East, Africa, and within the Non-Aligned Movement as a whole. Cairo has been a crossroads of the Arab world's commerce and culture for centuries, and its intellectual and Islamic institutions are at the center of the region's social and cultural landmarks.

Relations with the Arab States:

The Arab League headquarters is in Cairo, and the Secretary General of the League is traditionally an Egyptian. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Nabil Araby is the present Secretary General of the Arab League. Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali served as Secretary General of the United Nations from 1991 to 1996.

Egypt is on good terms with Libya, its western neighbor.

Egypt has fairly good relations with Sudan, its southern neighbor, although it has a land dispute with Sudan over the Hala'ib Triangle, a small area of land on the Egypt-Sudan border on the Red Sea coast. Sudan claims the area. Egypt's policy on Sudan is that it is in favor of a united Sudan. As such Egypt was not directly involved in the Sudan Peace Process that was hosted in Kenya under the auspices of IGAD and that gave the peoples of south Sudan the right to secede and form an independent state in 2011 after the long and brutal Sudanese civil war that cumulatively lasted more than 40 years and claimed over 2 million lives.

Israel – Palestine Conflict:

Egypt has been seeking to play a role in the resolution of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Egypt played an important role in the negotiations leading to the Madrid Conference of 1991, which, under United States and Soviet sponsorship, brought together all parties in the region, including for the first time a Palestinian delegation, to discuss Middle East peace.

This support has continued to the present, with President Hosni Mubarak often intervening personally to promote peace negotiations. In 1996, he hosted the Sharm El-Sheikh "Summit of the Peacemakers" attended by President Bill Clinton and other world leaders.

In 2000, he hosted two summits at Sharm El-Sheikh and one at Taba in an effort to resume the Camp David negotiations suspended in July 2000, and in June 2003, Mubarak hosted President George W. Bush for another summit on Middle East peace process. Another summit was convened in Sharm El Sheik in early 2005, which was attended by Egypt, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and Jordan. The Egyptian Chief of Intelligence, General Omar Suleiman, has played a substantial role in negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian sides and is highly respected on both sides.

Relations with the European Union:

European Union relations with Egypt are based on a partnership relation within the Euro – Mediterranean and Middle East area, which is of vital strategic importance and a key external relations priority for the EU.

Relations with USA:

After the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, Egyptian foreign policy began to shift as a result of the change in Egypt's leadership from President Gamal Abdel-Nasser to Anwar Sadat and the emerging peace process between Egypt and Israel. Sadat realized that reaching a settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict is a precondition for Egyptian development. To achieve this goal, Sadat ventured to enhance US-Egyptian relations to foster a peace process with Israel. After a seven-year hiatus, both countries reestablished normal diplomatic relations on February 28, 1974.

- Egypt has an embassy in Washington, DC and consulates-general in Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles and New York City.
- United States has an embassy in Cairo.

International Involvement:

Egypt played a key role during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf crisis. President Mubarak helped assemble the international coalition and deployed 35,000 Egyptian troops against Iraq to liberate Kuwait. The Egyptian contingent was one of the largest in the coalition forces, along with the U.S., U.K. and Saudi Arabia.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, Egypt signed the Damascus Declaration with Syria and the Persian Gulf states to strengthen Persian Gulf security. Egypt continues to contribute regularly to United Nations peacekeeping missions, most recently in East Timor, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, Egypt, which has itself been the target of terrorist attacks, has been a key supporter of the U.S. war against terrorists and terrorist organizations such as Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and has supported the Iraqi Governing Council.

On December 25, 2006, the Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit called for end to "nuclear double standards" where sanctions are imposed on Iran for enriching uranium, but the Israeli nuclear program is not subject to any control by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

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