

## **CHAPTER II**

### **UNITED STATES-EGYPT BILATERAL RELATIONS**

United States is a country that has a number of interests in the Middle East in both the economic, political and military fields. This is because the Middle East region has strategic value in world politics. These strategic values make the Middle East region a place of struggle in spreading the influence and interests of the world's superpowers, especially for the United States (Hoffmann, 1983).

Geographically Egypt is a country where most of its territory is located in northeastern Africa. In the Middle East map, Egypt is an important area for US strategic objectives. This is because Egypt is at the latitude of the world oil traffic (Office, 2006). Egypt also plays a moderate country in the Middle East and acts as a buffer for peace in the Middle East. This role directly influences Egypt's foreign relations with countries outside the Middle East region. Since normalizing relations with Israel, Western countries, especially the United States, have seen Egypt as a country that plays a key role in Middle East region peace. The West no longer sees Egypt as an aggressive country that constantly wages war in the region. The regional peace referred to by the US in this case is the absence of attacks aimed at Israel by Arab countries (Pradana, 2017).

This chapter will discuss the background of relations between the United States and Egypt. The explanation is then combined with bilateral relations that cover various fields, especially the security and economic fields between the United States and Egypt in general, by linking them with US foreign policy under the leadership of the Presidents of the United States and Egypt in different periods. Bilateral relations between the United States and Egypt are mostly in the political, economic and security fields. The United States began to have relations with Egypt in 1922, after Egypt gained independence from British.

United States-Egypt relations under Gamel Abdeel Naseer's government were very tenuous because Gamel preferred to cooperate with the Soviet Union rather than the United States. However, during the reign of Anwar Sadat, US-Egypt relations experienced an increase marked by the existence of the Camp David peace agreement with Israel which was the main US ally in the Middle East. After the assassination of Anwar Sadat by an Islamic fundamentalist military officer, finally Husni Mubarak as Vice President of Anwar Sadat rose as President in Egypt. When he took power, there is a significant increase in United States to provide special capabilities and expertise to Egypt for regional stability and the issue of terrorism.

#### **A. United States-Egypt Relations under Gamel Abdel Naseer**

The relations between the United States and Egypt were full of turmoil in the 1950s, when Gamal Abdel Nasser took control of the Egyptian government after the 1952 revolution. American officials accepted it as a progressive alternative to overthrow King Farouk, they helped Britain and Egypt negotiate agreements that ending the British occupation of Egypt and offering Egypt economic assistance and military assistance. But US-Egyptian relations deteriorated after 1954. The United States hopes that Egypt will cooperate with the West in planning anti-Soviet defenses and building regional stability by making peace with Israel. But Nasser decided to seek support among African and Arab countries to challenge Western presence in the Middle East and confront Israel (L.Han, 2007).

In January 1956, the United States and Britain promised to help Egypt fund the construction of the Aswan dam on the Nile River with \$ 56 million (Kuehner, 2009). But because Egypt began to build its military strength by taking the equipment provided by the USSR, so that on July 19, 1956 the US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles told the Egyptian Ambassador that the US had decided not to fund the construction of dams. Shortly after John Foster's statement was

conveyed, Britain also withdrew its assistance to the dam construction (W.Pratt, 1965).

The height of the tension between US and Egypt occurred on July 26, 1956, when President Gamal Abdul Nasser responded to this action by nationalizing the Suez Canal in an effort to continue funding the construction of the Aswan dam. This action by President Gamal Abdul Nasser is also referred to as the Suez Crisis. The statement eventually provoked Britain, France and Israel to invade Egypt. The aim of France and Britain to take action was to withdraw the Suez Canal which Nasser wanted to nationalize. Whereas Israel joined because, Egypt would not recognize the existence of their nation. The invasion actions carried out by the three countries are unknown to the US. By the time Israel invaded Egypt on October 26, 1956, the US began to worry about USSR interference in the incident because basically United States's goal at that time was to avoid the influence of the USSR in the Middle East (Harian Sejarah, 2017).

Therefore, when Egypt nationalized the Suez Canal, the United States intended to achieve a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The US Secretary of State, John F. Dulles sought to design a solution of the Suez crisis with the United Nations. US intelligence monitored the movement of British, French and Israeli forces around the canal which showed that they were preparing for war. The President of the United States, Eisenhower, warned the three parties to refrain from aggressive action. In 1957 President Eisenhower was finally able to persuade the three countries to withdraw from Egypt, which could allow the US to increase its relations with Egypt. President Eisenhower believed that the impact of the Suez conflict was a power vacuum in the Middle East after the departure of Britain and France. Therefore the United States is trying to find a gap to be able to have power in the Middle East.

In January 1957, the United States under the administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower implemented foreign policy contained in the Eisenhower Doctrine. In this doctrine, the Eisenhower Government emphasized that US forces would

secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of other countries from communist influence. He also asked the authorities to use \$ 200 million of Mutual Security funds for economic and military assistance to nations in the area to maintain their independence. Although Eisenhower was basically on the Egyptian side in the Suez crisis, there was no significant increase in relations between these two countries (W.Pratt, 1965).

In 1961 the United States was led by President John F. Kennedy who gave his foreign political focus to fight communism and establish relations with a country that was clearly anti-communist, besides that US also began to focus on forming new relations with the Middle East and Africa. After the Suez Crisis that occurred in Egypt, US again rearranged its foreign policy in the Middle East. Kennedy moved closer to President Nasser to improve his position in the Middle East. This position can strengthen its alliance relationship with Syria, Israel and Iraq, but it can still provide a gap for US to minimize the influence of the USSR in the region.

In addition, Kennedy was also worried about Nasser's relationship with the USSR, especially when Nasser obtained weapons from Czechoslovakia in September 1955 after he refused weapons assistance from the United States. American policymakers finally decided to further strengthen their relationship with Egypt. In 1961, Egypt experienced difficulties when investment growth stopped and crop failure caused the United States to provide wheat and also loan funds to Egypt. Through the field of economics, Kennedy wanted to show that having a strong relationship with America could benefit Egypt (Kuehner, 2009).

During Gamal Abdul Nasser's leadership, Egypt tended to direct its foreign policy to side with the Soviet Union. This cannot be separated from Israel's existence in the Middle East region, which was established in 1948. The existence of Israel has triggered the anger of Arab countries, especially Egypt which has always been a pioneer for other Arab countries in opposing the establishment of Israel. This opposition to Israel

cannot be separated from the Arab nationalism pioneered by Egyptian President Gamal Abdul Nasser, and has an impact on the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War three times, namely in the years 1948, 1967 and 1973 (Sihbudi, 2005).

In 1967 there was a "Six-Day War" between Egypt and Israel, at that time Nasser broke diplomatic relations with the United States after he accused the United States of directly assisting in Israeli airstrikes that destroyed his country. During the War of Attrition in 1967-1970, Egypt became dependent on Soviet military support, whereas the United States tended to return to support Israel. After Nasser's death in September 1970, relations between the United States and Egypt were still tenuous (L.Han, 2007).

Soviet support was evident from the 1967 Egyptian-Soviet Union friendship agreement that required the Soviet Union to provide military assistance to Egypt, which made Egypt more aggressive towards Israel which led to the outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War in 1973. The war itself was finally successfully won by Israel (Pradana, 2017).

### **B. United States-Egypt Relations under Anwar Sadat**

After the defeat in the Arab-Israeli War in 1973, Egypt began to be soft on Israel, which at that time was under the leadership of Anwar Sadat. This attitude certainly has consequences on the changing direction of Egyptian foreign policy which began to lean towards the United States. In 1976, Egypt adopted a policy to end the friendship agreement with the Soviet Union and then turned to Western countries. Changes to Egyptian policy are of course inseparable from the efforts of Western countries, especially the United States, which are trying to improve their relations with Arab countries after the 1973 embargo. One of the reasons that made Egypt willing to compromise with Israel which then resulted in the improvement of Egypt's relations with Western countries was Egypt's desire to regain the Sinai region which fell to Israel in the 1967 war (Pradana, 2017).

During Jimmy Carter's leadership 1977-1981 US foreign policy focused more on human rights and peace. Carter upholds

human rights and the rule of law in international affairs. Carter also criticized other countries regarding the issue of human rights violations and often linked economic and military cooperation to many countries as a form of commitment to America's ideal equality and freedom (Pavelec, 2010). Carter explained that his support for human rights was aimed at making the United States a leader in promoting human freedom throughout the world and protecting individuals from violating the power of a political actor.

President Carter stated that if Egypt reconciled with Israel then Egypt would have relations with the United States at the same level as Israel. In other words, the US will make Egypt and Israel the number one alliance in the Middle East. That way, Egypt will become America's strategic ally in the Middle East, providing stability in the Eastern Mediterranean region, becoming a stronghold to resist the influence of the Soviet Union in the Middle East and Africa, and become a launching point for US troops during the crisis in the Persian Gulf. In addition, Egypt will receive assistance to equip the armed forces and to improve the Egyptian economy (Kuehner, 2009).

In 1977, Anwar Sadat paid a visit to Israel. During the visit, Sadat spoke before the Israeli parliament about the importance of achieving peace in the Middle East. The visit had an impact on the improvement of Egypt's relations with Israel which was marked by the agreement of the two countries to sign a peace agreement between Egypt-Israel which was carried out at Camp David on September 17, 1978 for the assistance of the United States. The decision made Egypt the first country among Arab countries to recognize Israeli sovereignty. This caused Egypt to be removed from the Arab League (Harian Sejarah, 2017).

The Egyptian-Israeli peace agreement, known as the Camp David agreement, has made Egypt play a role as a buffer of peace in the Middle East region. Since normalizing relations with Israel, the US sees Egypt as a region that plays an important role in the peace of the Middle East region. Regional peace meant by the US in this case is the absence of an Israeli attack on Arab countries.

In 1979 the United States began providing military assistance with \$ 1.3 billion. In addition to military assistance, the US also provided economic assistance of \$ 815 million. Overall the total assistance given to Egypt each year during Mubarak's reign reached \$ 2.1 billion. At that time Egypt became the second-largest recipient of American civil and military aid after Israel (Meital, 1998)

Peace efforts with Israel and its friendship with the United States also made Egypt isolated from the Arab community and were harshly criticized by Islamic extremists. Until in October 1981, Anwar Sadat was killed by an Islamic fundamentalist military officer in Cairo who rejected the Camp David Agreement between Israel and Egypt (Kristanti, 2014). After President Sadat was killed by Islamic fundamentalists, Egypt was led by Hosni Mubarak where peace with Israel was still maintained and bilateral relations with America had an increase.

### **C. United States-Egypt Relations under Hosni Mubarak**

After the assassination of Anwar Sadat by an Islamic fundamentalist military officer, his power ended in 1981. Finally Hosni Mubarak as Vice President of Anwar Sadat and former commander of the Egyptian Air Force rose as President in Egypt (Sharp, 2018). When Mubarak took power, there was a significant increase in US efforts to provide special capabilities and expertise to Egypt for regional stability and the issue of terrorism. The US provides Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), and two Teledyne Ryan Aeronautical model 324 Scarab power jets and systems development Sciences Corporation R4E-50 UAV Skyeye is used on the Libyan and Sudanese borders to monitor and fight any military movements or arms smuggling. Egyptian intelligence acquired other surveillance technologies during the 1980s such as video cameras and also increased wiretapping capabilities (Alhenaki, 2015). The US also provides military assistance of approximately \$ 3.1 billion annually. In return, Egypt developed military relations with Israel in accordance with the agreement of the Camp David, United States also gained access

from the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace (Elmenshawy, 2013)

Egypt offers automatic approval to the US for overflights in its territory if the US conducts anti-terrorism operations in the Middle East (Shanker, 2013). For thirty years, joint training and the provision of assistance programs between the United States and Egypt continued to be carried out to bring the two countries have good bilateral relations. During Mubarak reign, senior delegations meet annually in Cairo or Washington to discuss defense relations, military cooperation and strategic policies specifically. In addition to military cooperation, intelligence operations and regional security, Egypt's relationship with Israel has always been a top priority for United States policy.

Husni Mubarak, who led Egypt for thirty years, has been working with the US President from 1981 in the era of President Ronald Reagan to President Obama when Mubarak was coup in 2011. During the Reagan administration (1981-1989), the US and Egypt made efforts to strengthen bilateral military relations between the two countries by forming Operation Bright Star in 1981. This joint exercise was carried out every two years. Operation Bright Star is a military training aimed at strengthening relations between the Egyptian and US armed forces. In addition, it also strengthens the military of the two countries in the Middle East to maintain regional security and fight terrorism. Operation Bright Star is designed to enhance military cooperation between the US and its coalition partners by strengthening the commitment to regional stability and mutual interests (Elmenshawy, 2013).

Operation Bright Star was originally only designated as US and Egyptian military training and developed in 1981 where the number of soldiers from both sides was increased when participating in this training. In 1983, the United States officially became the party responsible for planning and coordinating the design of Operation Bright Star in the future. Operation Bright Star, which was held in 1985 where this training was followed by the two countries' air and army forces, became the start of the new Operation Bright Star because more



than one US military force was involved. In 1987, the two countries' Special Forces and navy joined Operation Bright Star. Operation Bright Star then developed into multilateral cooperation in 1996 by adding France, England, Germany and the UAE (Elmenshawy, 2013). In 1998 Kuwait joined and then those who are bound by military training in 1999-2000 were the Netherlands, Jordan, Greece, and Italy.

United States efforts to increase Egypt's military power during Mubarak's reign were also seen through Foreign Military Financing (FMF) which made the Egyptian military begin to buy military equipment from the United States. The assistance made it easier for the United States to obtain logistical support during the crisis in the Middle East, including the Gulf War in 1990-1991, Egypt also persuaded more than half of the Arab League members to condemn the invasion by Iraq in Kuwait. This step facilitates US forces and their coalition to protect oil in Saudi Arabia as well as free Kuwait from invasion (Aftandilian, 2009).

Foreign Military Financing (FMF) is a source of grant and loan programs to help countries buy weapons and defenses produced in the US and obtain defense services and military training. The aim is to help the allied country's military to get services that can strengthen the country's defense capabilities, promote bilateral coalition efforts in the global war on terrorism, maintain support for democratically elected governments that share democratic, human rights and regional stability principles with the US, support for democratically elected governments that share the principles of democracy, human rights and regional stability with the US, support the US industrial base by promoting US exports of goods and services related to defense. In 2005, Egypt received \$ 1.3 billion in assistance. The policy and conditions for this assistance are by not using equipment or training for non-military units such as the police. FMF cannot also be given to military units without examination for some objectives, including human rights violations and narcotics trafficking (Aftandilian G. L., 2009).

To replace Soviet equipment with the US defense system, Egypt has been using US military assistance through Foreign Military Financing (FMF) in stages. According to the branch of the Egyptian defense office in Washington D.C, 39% of FMF funds were allocated to increase weapon system sophistication, 34% was allocated to support actions, and 27% was used for acquisitions. Egypt acquired 35 units of Apache Longbow AH-64D Block II helicopters from Boeing using FMF funds (Sharp, 2018).

International Military Education and Training (IMET) is a form of program funded by the U.S. Department of State and coordinated by the Departments of State and Defense aimed at improving Egypt's defense. This assistance program provides training in the form of grants to military students from allied countries. In addition to enhancing defense capabilities, IMET training exposes participants to professional US military organizations and the way organizations function under civilian control. The aim of the IMET program is to continue regional stability through mutually beneficial and effective military relations that bring the two countries closer to defense cooperation, provide training that can increase the ability of allied military forces to support joint operations and interoperability with US forces, encourage relations effective and mutually beneficial in terms of international peace and security (Sharp, 2018).

After the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States declared its country's determination to fight against terror. Egyptian intelligence gained greater access to US Intelligence and also received analytical training. Egypt is also one of the countries with an intelligence agency that aims to destroy the Al-Qaeda network. So that in 2002, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Richard Myers praised Egypt for having the same view as the US.

During President Bill Clinton's reign in 1993-2001, President Clinton launched the idea of the "National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement" in February 1994. The term "engagement" was intended to convey support for

internationalism and the rejection of isolationism. While the term "enlargement" is intended to broaden the community of democratic countries (Clawson, 1997). This idea invites all countries to implement a free market, seek multilateral peace and international alliances and a commitment to intervene in a world crisis situation that is practical and morally defensible (Riley). According to Clinton, the United States must also continue its role as a world leader in promoting human rights and democracy.

The democracy program was only channeled through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) which was launched in 2002 by President George (Aftandilian G. L., 2009). With an increasingly broad understanding of an increasingly open political environment, it will lead to improvements in governance and economic opportunities. From the main instruments used by the United States to change the world and expand its influence is by stipulating the provisions of providing economic assistance to other countries. Economic assistance is used as an instrument used to complete political and military instruments and become another source of global assistance in the dominance of the United States in the international system, including International Financial Institutions (IFIs), NGOs, etc.

The main target of the United States assistance is the free market, democracy and stability, in which the three targets are considered to be able to secure their interests in the region. When Egypt was isolated from Arab countries when it made peace with Israel, the United States extended large-scale assistance to offset the losses from diplomatic isolation received by Egypt. In 1994, Vice President Al Gore and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak formed the US Egypt Partnership for Economic Growth, a bilateral forum designed to improve the Egyptian private sector and promote US-Egyptian trade (Sharp, 2018). Besides that, there is a Trade & Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between the US and Egypt which is aimed at expanding trade and investment flows by taking appropriate steps to secure long-term development that benefits both

parties. The TIFA relationship between the US and Egypt was made by addressing trade development issues and investment relations. However, this cooperation was not fully implemented until now because the last meeting was held during Husni Mubarak's reign.

The United States also assists the Egyptian economy through Economic Support Funds (ESF) which are used at the same time to promote economic and political interests in its foreign policy by providing assistance to allies and countries that are in transition to democracy, supporting peace in the Middle East, and finance an economic stability program. The specific uses of this assistance are to enhance the role of the private sector in the economy, reduce government control in the market, increase job creation, increase economic growth, strengthen the promotion of sustainable democracy, promote decentralization, and strengthen local government, parliament, independent media and non- government. In 2004, Egypt received \$ 575 million in ESF assistance while in 2005, Egypt as a recipient country received \$ 535 million in funds. From the amount allocated to Egypt, no less than \$ 200 million must be given as an import commodity assistance program (Development, 2005).

The US Ambassador to Egypt, Francis Ricciardone explained the benefits and importance of assistance to Egypt in 2007 to the US Director of Foreign Assistance;

*“Egyptian strategic partnership played a central role in promoting peace and stability, countering extremism and terrorism, and creating an environment in which political and economic reforms can prosper. A key pillar of the relationship, U.S. economic and security assistance both symbolizes and vastly strengthens our nation's historic cooperation and long-term commitment to the partnership (Axelrod, 2010)”*. The statement shows that the provision of assistance and cooperation carried out between the US and Egypt is the key to the good relations between the two countries.

Disputes between the US and Egypt re-emerged in 2008, because the Mubarak regime which adhered an authoritarian

system in its government was pressured by the US to carry out domestic reforms by implementing a democratic system. Egyptian protests to overthrow Mubarak's regime exploded in 2011 and the US strongly supports revolutionaries to welcome change in the country. After 18 days of demonstrations, Husni Mubarak finally resigned from his position on February 11, 2011(Akbarzadeh, 2011).