

One Hundred Twelfth Congress
Congress of the United States

April 8, 2011

Field Marshal Mohamed Hussein Tantawi
Commander-in-Chief and Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces of the
Arab Republic of Egypt
The Ministry of Defense
Cairo, Egypt

Dear Field Marshal Tantawi,

We want to commend you and your command for the calm, professional way you handled the recent transition of power. During this historic time of change, we believe it is critical that the basic human rights of the Egyptian people are protected.

As Egyptians freely express their views in Tahrir Square, they should also have freedom to express their views online. Nearly every developed nation protects Internet freedom because it builds long-term confidence in freedom.

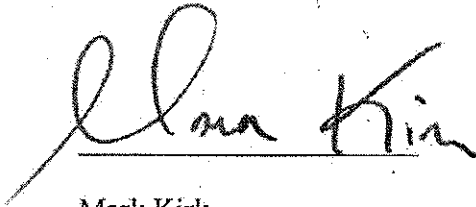
Recently, Dr. Maikel Nabil Sanad was arrested after simply posting Internet comments about the military on his blog. Freedom of speech means little if it only protects speech that supports the current government. While Dr. Nabil's statements did not reflect government policy, it harmed no one and represented a very tiny fraction of what is currently said for or against the current government in major media outlets.

On March 28, 2011, your spokesman, General Ismail Etmam, stated that Egypt's armed forces "are with the revolution, we support it and take a lot of measures for it to succeed." If growing confidence in Egypt is to go forward, then the government should not take rash, noticeable actions that attract international attention to Egypt.

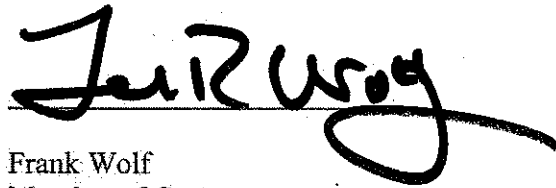
Dr. Nabil should not be punished for a simple online blog similar to thousands of others online. Dr. Nabil's arrest appears to have violated Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Therefore, we urge you to release Dr. Nabil to demonstrate the commitment of both our governments to a new era of human rights and democracy in Egypt.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Mark Kirk in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Mark Kirk
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Frank Wolf in black ink, written over a horizontal line.

Frank Wolf
Member of Congress

cc: His Excellency Sameh Shoukry, The Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the United States

The Honorable Hillary Rodham Clinton, United States Secretary of State

The Honorable Margaret Scobey, United States Ambassador to the Arab Republic of Egypt