



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 31, 2013

Senate to Vote Wednesday on Paul Proposal to Cut Aid to Egypt

Sometime today (Wednesday, July 31), the U.S. Senate is scheduled to a vote on a measure introduced by Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) aimed at blocking federal funds from being sent to Egypt.

Amendment 1739, an amendment to the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill, would eliminate military foreign assistance to Egypt based upon current law, which prohibits the United States from providing foreign assistance to nations that experience a military coup d'état. That money would be redirected to the "Bridges in Critical Corridors" fund in S.1243.



"We tell other countries to follow the rule of law, yet our own Administration fails to do so. Sending money to Egypt under their current military coup is illegal," [Paul said](#). "Instead of illegally sending that money overseas, we are better off spending that money at home."

The very fact that a vote is on the agenda is something of a victory for the libertarian-leaning freshman. As late as Tuesday, Paul [aides were quoted in Politico](#) as being unsure if the vote would ultimately happen.

One of the principal obstacles is the policy position held by Paul's colleague from Kentucky, Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell.

Politico reports that "a vote on Egypt would be difficult for Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), a long-time defender of foreign aid."

As was the case with a recent vote in the House on Representative Justin Amash's attempt to curtail the NSA's dragnet surveillance power, the vote in the Senate on the Paul amendment is likely to expose deep fissures in the landscape of the GOP. [Politico reported](#):

"It'll be a tough vote for everyone but probably a lot tougher for Republicans given their brewing civil war over foreign policy," the Democratic aide said, a reference to continued sniping between Paul and hawkish Republicans over national security priorities. If the amendment gets a vote, it will come just days after the Egyptian military fired on and killed dozens of pro-Muslim Brotherhood protesters.

There is reason to worry. Last September, Paul's effort to cut off aid to Egypt, Libya, and Pakistan couldn't even garner a dozen votes in favor.

Opposition to Paul's 2012 amendment came from not only Democrats, but some members of his own party, as well. [A reliable beater of the war drums, Senator Lindsey Graham](#) (R-S.C.) railed against the potential harm to Pakistan should Paul's amendment be approved and warned of the rise of



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“extremists” that could follow if the money supply is cut off. “Pakistan is a country with nuclear weapons that is hanging by a thread. I think it would be a very bad idea,” Graham said. “They’ve opened up the supply routes; they have been helpful in some areas.”

“We live in dangerous times, and I am very worried about the possibility of a nuclear-armed Pakistan falling into extremist hands,” he added.

McConnell joined Graham in warning of the danger of turning our backs on Pakistan, Libya, and Egypt:

This is a moment for Americans to show our closest allies in the Middle East that we unequivocally stand with them. No mixed signals. Neither Israel, nor any of our allies, should ever have any reason to doubt that resolve.

In [a speech calling for a vote on his amendment](#), Senator Paul painted a different picture of the situation in Pakistan and their role as an ally: “I’m not saying don’t have relations with Pakistan. Many in Pakistan have been sympathetic to our country. Many in Pakistan have helped our country. But many in Pakistan with a wink and a nod look at us, take our money and laugh at us. They cash our check and they laugh at us.”

Surprisingly, Senator John McCain (R-Ariz.), a reliable promoter of Pax Americana, has called for an end to aid to Egypt, based on his opinion that the ouster of former President Morsi was a “coup.” The Obama administration has thus far refused to use that magic word to describe the tumult in Egypt. There doesn’t seem to be hope of any change in that attitude. The Associated Press reported:

The Obama administration told lawmakers Thursday that it won’t declare Egypt’s government overthrow a coup, U.S. officials and lawmakers said, allowing the United States to continue providing \$1.5 billion in annual military and economic aid to the Arab world’s most populous country.

William Burns, the State Department’s No. 2 official, held closed-doors briefings with House and Senate members just a day after Washington delayed delivery of four F-16 fighter jets to Egypt. It was the first U.S. action since the military ousted Mohammed Morsi as president, imprisoned him and other Muslim Brotherhood members and suspended the constitution earlier this month.

What every lawmaker — even Senator Paul — has failed to mention is that there is no provision in the Constitution empowering the federal government to send money to foreign regimes.

In fairness, while visiting Israel in January, [Senator Paul did call for a “gradual” elimination of all foreign aid](#). He based his opposition to the largesse on economic concerns rather than on the lack of constitutional authority for the outlays.

The real story, however, is not the waste or the abuse of foreign aid. The more insidious aspect of the tale is the vicious cycle of monied interests and war profiteers that are kept flush by the fraud. As was [expertly explained by the blog American Action Report](#) in March 2012:

Billions of dollars are borrowed in the taxpayers’ name, supposedly to help needy people overseas. Little or none of it is sent to needy people anywhere. It’s sent to foreign governments, whose corrupt leaders use the power of distribution to prop up their rule.

By agreement with the “donor” government, most or all of it is used to buy goods and services from U.S. corporations such as the military industrial complex.

Of course, the borrowed money has to be repaid to the banksters who had created it out of thin air.



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It's not paid by the recipient government or by the corporations; it's repaid by the American taxpayers — with interest paid over so many years that it amounts to several times the value of the loan, and the American people never get out of debt.

And the cycle continues.

In April, in [a hearing before the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform](#), the deputy director of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the federal agency charged with overseeing the foreign aid program — including in Afghanistan, where the infamous “bags of cash” were dropped off — testified about the rampant misappropriation of U.S. assistance by nations that routinely disregard federal government guidelines for the use of the money.

Michael G. Carroll provided a couple of typical examples of the fraud and how “humanitarian aid” ends up buying bullets:

In Pakistan, where USAID provided cash payments to support a Government program to help alleviate poverty, the host government transferred U.S. Government funds into its general budget account without authorization from USAID. USAID was not aware that the Pakistani Government had transferred the funds because it did not receive needed information from the host government and therefore could not adequately monitor the program. In connection with a USAID cash transfer agreement with the Jordanian Government, USAID did not monitor funds spent on specified development activities and \$1.2 million in funds were used for prohibited activities, such as military spending.

Referring to just this type of admitted abuse, Senator Paul told Secretary Kerry, “I would hope that the rampant instances of waste and misuse, particularly ones already catalogued within your own Department, would be made available to the public, and investigated, so that the American people can judge for themselves whether the benefits of our aid are indeed worth the costs.”

The true cost, however, is not just financial. When billions are siphoned from American citizens through unconstitutional and oppressive tax schemes and then funneled into the coffers of crooked foreign regimes, the Constitution and the liberty it protects are bartered away in the bargain.

Americans committed to restoring constitutional limits on the power of the federal government, including the end to all foreign aid, should immediately contact their senators and encourage them to vote in favor of the Paul amendment (Amendment 1739) to the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development appropriations bill.

Photo of man injured by Egyptian government: AP Images

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