



Supply Chain Opportunities: A Partnership for Egypt and the U.S. American Chamber of Commerce, U.S.-Egypt Business Council

**Remarks by
Senator John McCain**

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Conrad Hotel, Cairo

Thank you, Mr. Moharam, for that kind introduction.

I am so pleased that I am able to join you today. And I am even more pleased that I was able to bring a few of my friends, both Republican and Democrat, with me. I have with me Senator Lindsey Graham from South Carolina, Senator Jeff Sessions from Alabama, Senator Dick Blumenthal from Connecticut, and Senator John Hoeven from North Dakota. We are all strong supporters of the U.S.-Egypt partnership -- and firm believers in the work that brings all of you, and the firms you represent, here to Cairo for today's Supplier Conference.

The idea for this Conference was born last summer during a trip to Egypt that I made with Jeff Immelt, Senator John Kerry and a delegation of U.S. business leaders. Some of you in this room were with us. And I want to take this opportunity to thank Mr. Hebayeb for the critical role that he and General Electric have played in making sure that this conversation and this meeting comes to fruition.

As Jeff and I envisioned it, the goal of our trip last June was to signal America's support -- and the support of America's private sector in particular -- for the common interest we share with the government and people of Egypt -- the goal of assisting this country in its emergence as a strong democracy with a robust and thriving economy. That is good for the Egyptian people. It is good for the American people. And it is good for business and workers in both of our countries.

Last year, the Egyptian people inspired their neighbors and inspired the world when they peacefully raised their voices to demand the opportunity to shape a better future for themselves and their nation. Last year's revolution gave the people of Egypt a chance -- not a guarantee of success, but a chance to change the nature of their country, which is far more than many people in Egypt had for decades.

Clearly, Egypt continues to face major challenges, especially economically, which is largely what motivated people across this country to take to the streets last year. Those challenges have grown more severe in the past year. But that is what makes the work that you are doing together with your partners in Egypt's business community so vital.

The simple fact is, the success of Egypt's political transition depends in large part on the revitalization and growth of Egypt's economy. Unless Egypt can create jobs for the millions of young people in this country who desire a future of dignity for themselves, the politics of Egypt will be unsettled, and the forces of extremism here could grow more and more powerful.

This is a decisive moment in the history of the Middle East -- a moment of tectonic change as significant as anything this region has experienced since the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. The key we all recognize is Egypt. This country is the heart of the Arab world, and how Egypt develops will shape the future of every country in this region.

All of you are at the forefront of this historic transformation, which will have an overwhelming impact on the national security and economic interests of the United States. You are certainly strengthening the bottom lines of your companies and creating jobs for American workers. But you are doing more than that. You are providing critical support to the Egyptian economy and Egyptian workers at a time when they need it most. You are strengthening the appeal of free market and pro-business practices in this country by showing that such ideas can deliver the improved livelihoods that people here demand. And perhaps most of all, you are demonstrating the commitment of the American people to the success of what the Egyptian people began last January -- a grand experiment in democratic rule and economic empowerment.

Egypt is changing, it is true. And as such, the nature of America's partnership with Egypt is also changing. But the fact remains that we must remain the strongest of friends -- politically, economically, and militarily. We must maintain and strengthen the key pillars of that partnership, especially our commercial and trading relationship. And where the people of Egypt and their new elected government make the right decisions about the policies that will shape their sovereign nation's future, we must be here to reinforce and support them.

All of you are helping to lead this important effort. And on behalf of all Americans, I want to thank you. I want to thank you for giving the people of this country an opportunity to realize the future that a short time ago we never believed was possible. I want to thank you because this is a most challenging time in many respects in the history of this country, certainly in modern times. I want to thank you because people all over the world are watching, carefully examining the experiment that goes on here, the steps forward and the steps back, the challenges that all of our relationships face with this new government. But at the end of the day, what we must most appreciate, more than anything else, is that the people of Egypt have the opportunity, a chance, an opportunity to live the lives that are better for themselves and future generations. You play the vital role in that entire equation. I say, "thank you." I thank all of you who had something better to do today than be here. I thank all of you that have been inspired by these young people who, using devices, devices such as this, were able to organize and were able to peacefully demonstrate in direct repudiation of Al Qaeda and other terrorist organizations, and whether they succeed or not to a large degree will determine whether the rest of the Arab world and indeed the rest of the world. The most misnamed aspect of this is the Arab Spring. It is not the Arab Spring, ask the people in Moscow, ask the people, even in Beijing, ask the people all over the world who were inspired not much more than a year ago, by a young man in Tunisia who decided that he would make the ultimate sacrifice and burn himself to death in protest of his inability to live a better life, and to achieve those of us that we say, so immortally, that we are endowed by our creator by certain inalienable rights all of us are endowed by those inalienable rights, and the future of millions and millions of people here and throughout the world lies to some degree in your hands and our ability to give them the better lives that they have struggled and sacrificed for. Thank you and God bless.