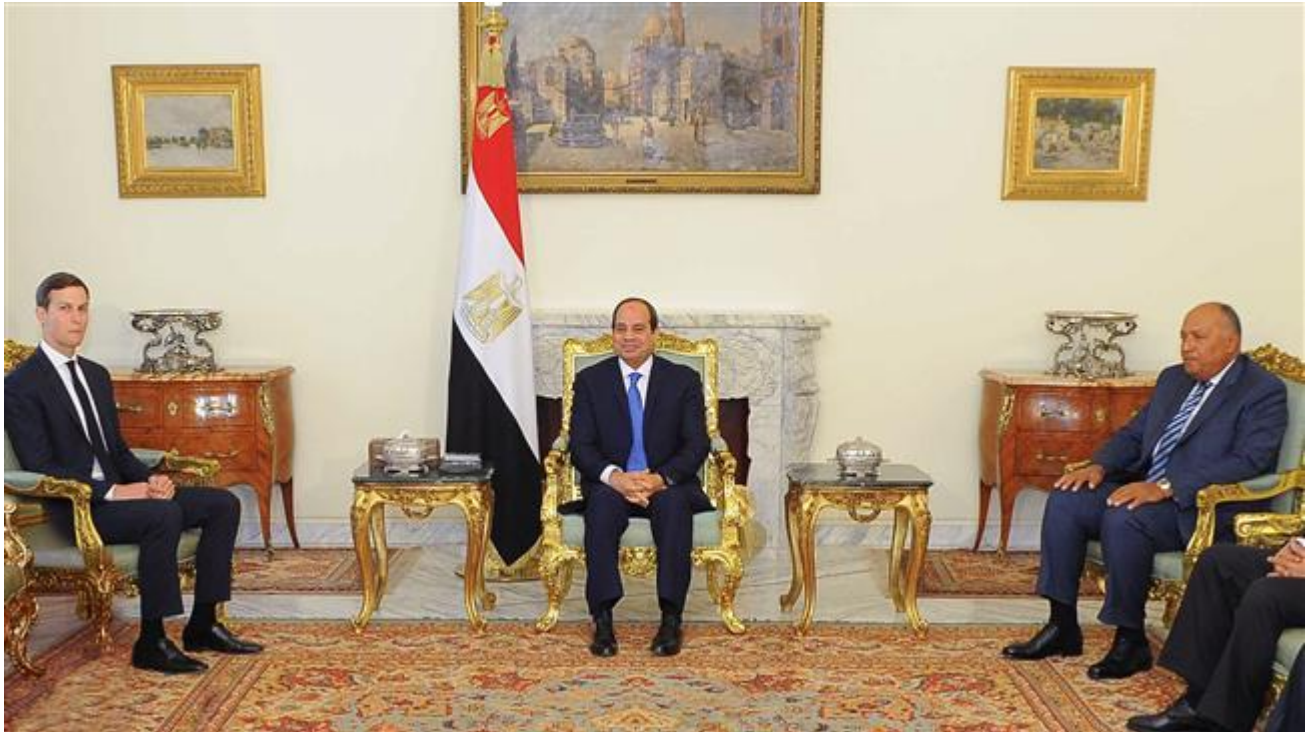


Press TV: Egypt slams US over decision to cut aid, warns of 'repercussions'

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A handout picture released by the Egyptian Presidency on August 23, 2017 shows President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi (C) meeting with Senior White House Adviser Jared Kushner (L), accompanied by Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry at the presidential palace in the capital Cairo. (Photo by AFP)

Egypt has censured Washington's decision to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in aid to the country over its human rights record amid a visit to Cairo by an American delegation, including Senior White House Adviser Jared Kushner, as part of a tour of the Middle East.

The delegation, which is in Cairo for meetings on the so-called peace process regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, met Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry on Wednesday, his spokesman Alaa Youssef said.

The meeting had been initially removed from Shoukry's schedule with no explanation, which was interpreted as a response to the aid cut.

The delegation also met with President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, said the spokesman.

Washington on Tuesday cut \$96 million in aid and delayed \$195 million in military funding. The US State Department said the decision followed a lack of progress on human rights and the passing of a new law

regulating the work of non-governmental organizations, which was seen as restricting their activities. Sisi ratified the law in May.

Egypt's Foreign Ministry said in a statement on Wednesday that it "regrets the decision."

"Egypt considers this step as a **misjudgement** of the nature of the strategic relations that binds the two countries over decades," the statement added.

The ministry also warned that the move "may have negative repercussions."

The decision made by of the administration of US President Donald Trump was surprising after he promised strong ties with the key US ally following a period of strain under former President Barack Obama.



US President Donald Trump (R) and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi meet at a hotel in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, May 21, 2017. (Photo by AFP)

Sisi, the former head of the Egyptian armed forces, came to power in July 2013 after the first-ever democratically-elected president, Mohamed Morsi, was ousted in a coup.

Rights groups say hundreds of people have been killed during the putsch and after draconian security measures were introduced in the wake of the coup. More than 20,000 people have also reportedly been arrested. Amnesty International has raised the alarm over rampant forced disappearances in the country under Sisi.

The Arab state had its 1-billion-dollar-plus military aid from Washington suspended for some time under the previous US administration over the strong-arm tactics.