WASHINGTON, D.C.--Congressman Jeff Fortenberry today issued the following statement concerning today’s escalating clashes in Egypt:

"This is a highly complex and dangerous situation in the streets of Egypt.

"Egypt is the cultural and historic center of the Arab world and has provided a stabilizing influence in the volatile Middle East. This is a critical moment for the future of the country and the region.

"People have the right to express their concerns with the government, and there must be space within Egyptian civil society for the highest aspirations of the people. Peaceful and pragmatic dialogue are necessary hallmarks of democratic change. Unfortunately, chaos and violence is the current dynamic. It is important that the outcome addresses the sources of tension and despair while preventing exploitation by violent extremists."

Congressman Fortenberry, who has lived near Tahrir Square in Cairo, is a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

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