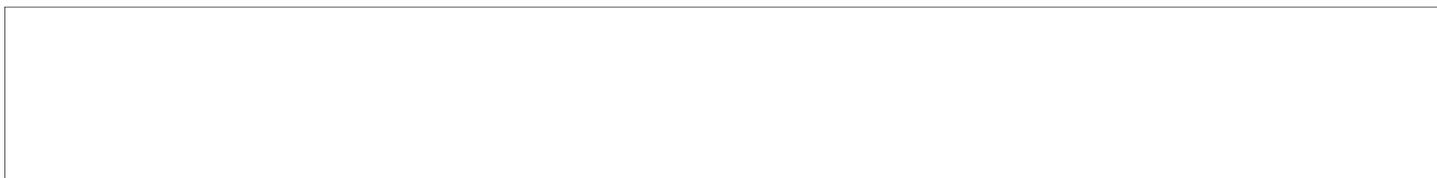


RELEASE IN PART B5

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Friday, June 8, 2012 2:00 PM
To: H
Subject: FW:

You'll love this one. Morsi is a 9/11-denier.

From: Benaim, Daniel
Sent: Friday, June 08, 2012 1:58 PM
To: Sullivan, Jacob J
Subject:



B5

Foreign Policy Magazine Brother Number One

Meet the man who might be Egypt's president: the Muslim Brotherhood's second choice, and 9/11-denier, Mohamed Morsi.

BY SHADI HAMID | JUNE 7, 2012



Egypt is on the cusp of its first real experiment in Islamist governance. If the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohamed Morsi comes out on top in the upcoming presidential runoff election, scheduled for June 16 and 17, the venerable Islamist movement will have won control of both Egypt's presidency and its parliament, and it will have a very real chance to implement its agenda of market-driven economic recovery, gradual Islamization, and the reassertion of Egypt's regional role.

Over the course of Egypt's troubled transition, the Brotherhood has become increasingly, and uncharacteristically, assertive in its political approach. Renouncing promises not to seek the presidency and entering into an overt confrontation with the ruling military council, the Brotherhood's bid to "save the revolution" has been interpreted by others as an all-out power grab. Egypt's liberals, as well as the United States, now worry about the implications of unchecked Brotherhood rule and what that might mean for their interests.

Things couldn't have been more different two years ago. Under the repression of Hosni Mubarak's regime, the Brotherhood's unofficial motto was "participation, not domination." The group was renowned for its caution and patient (some would say too patient) approach to politics. When I sat down with Morsi in May 2010 -- just months before the revolution and well before he could have ever imagined being Mubarak's successor -- he echoed the leadership's almost stubborn belief in glacial but steady change. He even objected to a fairly anodyne description of the movement's political activities: "The word 'opposition' has the connotation of seeking power," Morsi told me then. "But, at this moment, we are not seeking power because [that] requires preparation, and society is not prepared." The Muslim Brotherhood, being a religious movement more than a political party, had the benefit of a long horizon.

Morsi wasn't well known back then. He was an important player in the Brotherhood, but did not seem to have a particularly distinctive set of views. He was a loyalist, an enforcer, and an operator. And he was arguably good at those things. But being, or becoming, a leader is a different matter. Despite heading the Brotherhood's parliamentary bloc and later leading the group's newly formed Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), Morsi struggled to command respect across ideological lines. He rarely spoke like someone who liked making concessions or doing the hard work necessary for building consensus.

Like many Brotherhood leaders, he nurtured a degree of resentment toward Egypt's liberals. They were tiny and irrelevant, the **thinking went**, so why were they always asking for so much? In May 2010, the opposition seemed to be coming alive, but in a uniquely Egyptian way. At one protest in Tahrir Square, each group -- Islamists, liberals, and leftists -- huddled in its own part of the square. I asked Morsi why there wasn't greater cooperation between Islamists and liberals. "That depends on the other side," he said, echoing what the liberals were saying about the Brotherhood.

This thinly veiled disdain could be papered over when liberals, leftists, and Brotherhood members were facing a dictator they all hated. And, during the revolution, Brotherhood members, Salafists, liberals, and ordinary Egyptians joined hands and put the old divisions aside -- if only for a moment. When Mubarak fell, though, there was little left to unite them.

The international community, particularly the United States, shares the liberals' fear of Islamist domination, but for a very different set of reasons. Historically, the Brotherhood has been one of the more consistent purveyors of anti-American and anti-Israeli sentiment. While some Brotherhood leaders, particularly lead strategist Khairat El Shater, are less strident in their condemnations and less willfully creative with their conspiracy theories in private, Morsi is not. In a conversation with me, he volunteered his views on the 9/11 terrorist attacks without any prompting. "When you come and tell me that the plane hit the tower like a knife in butter," he said, shifting to English, "then you are insulting us. How did the plane cut through the steel like this? Something must have happened from the inside. It's impossible."

According to various **polls**, such views are held by most Egyptians, including leftists and liberals, but that doesn't make them any less troubling. It is perhaps ironic, then, that out of the Brotherhood's top officials, Morsi has spent the most time in the United States. He is a graduate of the University of Southern California and, interestingly, the father of two U.S. citizens -- a reminder that familiarity can sometimes breed contempt. At a recent **news conference**, Morsi discussed his time living abroad, painting a picture of a society in moral decay, featuring crumbling families, young mothers in hospitals who have to "write in the name of the father," and couples living together out of wedlock. We don't have these problems in Egypt, he said, his voice rising with a mixture of pride and resentment.

I met Morsi again, a year later in May 2011, at the Brotherhood's new, plush headquarters in Muqattam, nestled on a small mountain on Cairo's outskirts. The Brotherhood leader seemed surprisingly calm. He punctuated his Arabic with English expressions; he made jokes (they weren't necessarily funny), name-checked the 1978 film ***The Deer Hunter***, and even did an impromptu impression of a former U.S. president. In the early days, in the afterglow of the 18-day uprising, the group's leaders were still careful to say the right things. He was quick to point out that 2,500 of the FJP's 9,000 founding members were not from the Brotherhood, and included Christians.

He was also dismissive of ultraconservative Salafi movements. They weren't politically mature yet, he said. The implication was obvious: The Brotherhood, unlike the Salafists, had spent decades first learning and then playing -- rather skillfully at times -- the game of politics. They learned how and when to compromise and how to justify it to their conservative base. Now, nearly 28 years after first entering parliament in 1984, the group was taking pains to present itself as the moderate, respectable face of political Islam.

But the Brotherhood soon realized that it had stumbled upon one of those rare moments where a country's politics are truly open and undefined. So they decided to seize it, alienating many of their erstwhile liberal allies in the

process. This approach was a good fit with the Brotherhood's distinctly majoritarian approach to democracy: They had won a decisive popular mandate in the parliamentary elections, with 47 percent of the vote, so why shouldn't they rule?

Eventually, the Brotherhood decided to go for broke. "We have witnessed obstacles standing in the way of parliament to take decisions to achieve the demands of the revolution," Morsi **said** in March. "We have therefore chosen the path of the presidency not because we are greedy for power but because we have a majority in parliament which is unable to fulfill its duties."

The more important question is: Does it really matter what Morsi thinks? The Brotherhood's presidential campaign was never about Morsi. It was about the Brotherhood, and Morsi just happened to be the substitute candidate -- an unlikely **accident of history** -- after the charismatic Shater was disqualified from the race. This is what makes it difficult to assess a Morsi presidency. Over the past year, Shater's personal office has become the address for a steady stream of big-shot investors and visiting dignitaries, including senior U.S. officials. Those who have met him have come out both impressed and reassured.

It was Shater who plucked Morsi from relative obscurity to join the Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau, the organization's top decision-making body, and then selected him to lead the Brotherhood's political arm. Up until now, there has been little daylight between the two men. But will Shater be able to maintain his sway if Morsi ascends to Egypt's highest office? Some Brotherhood members are already chafing at the idea of Shater -- whom supporters and detractors alike portray as a brilliant but domineering operative -- serving as the power behind the throne: "If Morsi is able to free himself from the shadow of Shater, his policies will be balanced. If Shater stays in control, Morsi will become increasingly unpopular and fail to govern effectively," one Brotherhood member who has worked with both figures told me. "Will Morsi become the son who surpassed the father?"

On the campaign trail, Morsi has proved a quick study and a hard worker. Campaign aides have worked to repackage him, coaching him on his speaking style and how to use his hands in interviews. In the process, the candidate has grown more confident -- and it's starting to show. His May 30 **appearance** on Yosri Fouda's television program showed a surprisingly fluent speaker, a far cry from his earlier, shaky media appearances. As one Brotherhood member remarked, "The new Morsi of today is different from the person I knew."

Although Morsi outperformed most polls in coming out on top in the first round of elections, for the Brotherhood, his 25 percent share of the vote amounted to something of a shock. The group's internal projections, based on polling conducted weeks before the vote, saw Morsi with a commanding lead -- it was only a question of how close he would get to 50 percent. Morsi's lack of charisma -- as well as the lack of respect he commands among non-Islamists -- was part of the reason for his disappointing showing. But it was also the result of a series of more serious mistakes and miscalculations. Brotherhood officials had become detached from the changing tenor in the group's former strongholds in the Nile Delta, where the Brotherhood was overtaken by Ahmed Shafiq, Mubarak's last prime

minister. The Islamist-dominated parliament had failed to pass the sweeping reform legislation that many had expected. Most controversial was an attempt to stack the constituent assembly with Brotherhood supporters, a classic case of political overreach.

After the revolution, the Brotherhood -- like so many other political forces in Egypt's toxic political scene -- became consumed by paranoia, fearing that some combination of liberals, leftists, and old regime elements were out to get them. A democratic opening, as welcome as it was, came with its own risks. The rise of Brotherhood defector **Abdel Moneim Aboul Fotouh** as a viable candidate was seen as an unprecedented threat to organizational unity and discipline.

This paranoia, mixed with an old-fashioned dose of political cynicism, seeped into the group's discourse on foreign policy. When Egypt's ruling military council lifted a travel ban on American NGO workers in an attempt to defuse a political crisis, the Brotherhood-led parliament pounced, using the episode to **call for a no-confidence vote** and demand the removal of the military-appointed government. Brotherhood parliamentarians blamed the Egyptian government for giving into American pressure and called on Egypt to refuse U.S. aid. "I wish members of the U.S. Congress could listen to you now to realize that this is the parliament of the revolution, which does not allow a breach of the nation's sovereignty or interference in its affairs," **said** parliament speaker Saad al-Katatni, a Brotherhood official, in reaction to the debate.

The Brotherhood has found itself doing a difficult dance, thinking one thing in private and saying another in public. Such mixed messages are also a function of the love-hate schizophrenia that many Brotherhood members -- and Egyptians in general -- seem to display toward the United States. I remember the early days of Barack Obama's presidency, when Brotherhood officials would complain bitterly about the White House's disinterest in democracy promotion. "For Obama, the issue of democracy is 15th on his list of priorities," one Brotherhood official told me in May 2010. "There's no moment of change like there was under Bush."

It is true that the Brotherhood, along with most of Egypt, hates particular U.S. policies, particularly those related to Palestine. It also tends to think that somehow -- usually through creative, indirect means -- the United States is responsible for various nefarious plots against Egypt. But that doesn't mean that a Brotherhood-dominated government would immediately reorder Cairo's international alliances. For all the public vitriol, the Brotherhood actually feels more comfortable with America than it does with America's adversaries: "The U.S. is a superpower that is there and will be there, and it is not to anyone's benefit to have this superpower going down, but we want it to go up with its values and not with its dark side," one senior Brotherhood official told me. "What are the values driving China across the globe?... It's just pure profit. The Russians and the Chinese, I don't know their values! Western European and American core values of human rights and pluralism -- we practiced this when we were living there."

Values aside, a Morsi administration simply would not be able to afford a rupture in relations with the United States. A Muslim Brotherhood-led Egypt will need to rebuild its deteriorating economy, and U.S. and European loans,

assistance, and investment will be crucial to this effort. There's also no certainty that a President Morsi could drastically alter Egypt's foreign policy even if he wanted to -- regardless of what Egypt's new constitution says, the military and the intelligence services will continue to exercise veto power over critical defense and national security issues.

While there are limits to how much the Brotherhood can alter Egypt's foreign policy, there are also limits to how far it can go in satisfying U.S. concerns. As Egypt becomes more democratic, elected leaders will have no choice but to heed popular sentiment on foreign policy. And in an otherwise divided polity, the only real area of consensus is the need for an independent, assertive foreign policy that re-establishes Egypt's leading role in the region. That means tension and disagreement with the United States will become a normal feature of the bilateral relationship. The model to look to is Turkey, led by the Islamically oriented Justice and Development Party, which has employed anti-Israel rhetoric to useful domestic effect.

The effect of a Morsi presidency on domestic policy is similarly hazy. Egypt's byzantine bureaucracy remains stocked with Mubarak loyalists and could block any changes that Morsi tries to push through. As a former political advisor to the Brotherhood predicted to me, the "state machinery will devour him." To further confuse matters, Morsi is one of the rare presidential candidates who believes in limiting the power of his own office. In his TV interview with Fouada, he again stated his preference: an interim period with a mixed presidential-parliamentary system, which would pave the way for a system in which the legislature held complete sway. A Brotherhood-led assembly is set to draft a constitution that will define the relative powers of elected institutions.

But, of course, Morsi's opinion on the matter could change once he became president. The Muslim Brotherhood's first experience in governance will be an experiment, and one the organization may not be prepared for. Elections have consequences. We just don't know what they'll be. And, for that matter, neither does Morsi.

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23 comments



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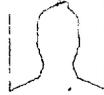
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Puller58

All mere speculation which is only slightly leavened with the admission of the military's veto power over whatever Morsi and the MB try to do.
17 HOURS AGOREPLYLIKE

Conversation from Twitter



winscreenj from Twitter

@FP_Magazine I don't shaar (think so). They have to deal with other "Islamic" countries.



jessradio from Twitter

@KarimMaged @fp_magazine The Americans don't seem to have a problem with the Wahhabi/Sauds running Saudi Arabia...



KarimMaged from Twitter

@jessradio nope, they're their Glen Beck and Newt Gingrich counterparts with beards



NimboKatz from Twitter

@moiracathleen Except that we don't make Middle East policy decisions based on our national interest. Agree with your statement, though.



Kony2012WEST from Twitter

@FP_Magazine only if its #JOSEPHKONY



ElleryMitten from Twitter

@combatjourno @AmiriEhsan @perthtones read 2x...sorry but this is a fairly accurate description of our fucked up government & society #usa



Roxiefov1v from Twitter

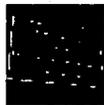
@saudinidal <http://t.co/G4xTmi9g>



HarvardDr from Twitter

@blakehounshell yeah! So are 90% of Egyptians.

Conversation from Facebook



Josh Casey

Yea fpm, just because you believe the official story of 9/11, doesnt mean it is true... As with almost all mainstream media, you are a propaganda arm of the military industrial complex and in fact are nothing more than yellow rag hacks...



David Miko

Whoever becomes Egypt's next president, it is the military who will pull the strings from behind the curtain. ...



Jasim Malik

Sorry, but for once you Americans will not be dictating which corrupt crony will rule the Muslim countries you have interests in :) Thank God - you've killed enough people since 9/11 already.



Michael Luke

It's Time for the world to wake up & know the real face.



Belmot Chan

As the world keeps rejecting the arming of the Free Syrian Army it continues to watch as Russia who has fiercely rejected any intervention in Syria, continue to provide arms & weapons to the Syrian regime to kill its own people. To call it a farce is being too kind.



Glenn Andrew Cabusora

oh God the next achmd.. whatever the guys name is. A loon that denies the holocaust .. now this Egyptian mofo.



Mathieu Trudelle

U.S aid to Egypt is no longer justified now that Israel has the operative capability to blow each and every member of the Arab League + Iran & Turkey to smithereens. Arms industry lobbyists are going to disagree, tho.



Sergej Nesic

Denier? Hardly, no one is denying it happened; he's just stating what most of the world an millions of Americans already know.



Sohrob Tahmasebi

If he becomes their leader then maybe we should cut off our annual aid to Egypt. I can't believe what they're doing in the Arab world. Trading one asshole for another right when they should be embracing candidates who promote modernity and are looking to get away from theocratic ideologues.



Coco Smith

Great. With such a biased viewpoint, he should make great policy decisions. I feel sorry for Egypt, they sought freedom and now a dictator of another stripe seeks to rule them.



Lisa Hall

well crap



ياسكوئى سىرى شهاب

lolz

2 new comments

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