

America Turning a Blind Eye to Egypt's 'New Pharoah?'

During the past few months, Egyptian President **Mohammed Morsi** has seized absolute power over his country.

The Muslim Brotherhood leader enjoys support from the Obama administration, but his opponents call him a dictator who wants to turn Egypt into an Islamic state. Some have even called him Egypt's "new Pharoah."

He is the most powerful man in the Arab world's most influential country. He's referred to America as an enemy. And as a 9/11 conspiracy theorist, he denies al Qaeda was behind that attack.

Yet he's due to receive sixteen F-16 fighter jets and 200 Abrams tanks from the Obama administration this year. A majority of Republican senators signed off on the deal.

A Hostile Character

So who is this questionable ally that America is helping to arm?

"He's a rough personality. He's quite hostile—he doesn't like to answer questions," Eric Trager, with the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said.

Trager studies the **Muslim Brotherhood** and has interviewed Mohammed Morsi face-to-face.

"He was considered within the Brotherhood as a hardliner—somebody who was there to enforce the Brotherhood's most hardline ideas whether it came to saying that women and Christians can't even run for the presidency of Egypt, whether it was their foreign policy ideas, their hostility toward Israel," he said.

Morsi put that hostility on full display in a series of interviews before he became Egypt's president.

In one, he called Israelis "bloodsuckers" and "warmongers" and referred to Israel and America as "enemies." He also quoted from the Koran, calling Jews "the descendants of apes and pigs."

In another interview, Morsi called on the Muslim world to confront Israel and boycott goods from any nation that does business with it, including America.

He branded Jews "hostile by nature" and called for every inch of Israel to become a Palestinian state.

"The idea that he would moderate, that he would rule inclusively – always overlooked who he was within the Brotherhood and assumed also that he could change in ways that are simply not realistic," Trager said.

America's Blind Eye

Trager said that Morsi hails from the Brotherhood's most radical wing. Yet the Obama administration appears to believe he's a positive force in the region.

When Morsi helped broker a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas late last year, administration officials publicly praised him. Then-Secretary of State **Hillary Clinton** thanked him for his "personal leadership."

According to *The New York Times*, **President Obama** told aides he was impressed with Morsi's "pragmatic confidence. He sensed an engineer's precision with surprisingly little ideology."

One day later, Morsi issued a decree banning any opposition to his laws and decisions in Egypt. Egyptians responded by taking to the streets in violent protests that continue to rage.

"Now Morsi holds in his hand all the powers—all the powers of judicial, legislative, and executive. And also nobody can cancel his decisions," Former Israeli Ambassador to Egypt Zvi Mazel said.

As the former Israeli ambassador, Mazel has seen the Brotherhood up close.

"According to my understanding of the Muslim Brothers, their ideology will be superior to pragmatism. They will provoke crises with Israel and also with the United States," he said.

"Listen, the Muslim Brothers fought for 84 years to reach power and impose Sharia [Islamic law]," he added. "Now that they are in power, will they say, 'Okay, now we are going to become modern people. We are going for high tech and Allah is not important?' No, it's impossible."

Morsi's government is vowing to honor its peace treaty with Israel, for now. Another interesting note about Morsi: he reportedly joined the Muslim Brotherhood not in Egypt but here in America when he was a student at the University of Southern California.