

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sidney Blumenthal <[REDACTED]>
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To: H
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CONFIDENTIAL

December 8, 2012

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Intel: Badie, Morsi and the Opposition

SOURCE: Sources with access to the highest levels of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, The leadership of the Armed Forces, and Western Intelligence, diplomatic, and security services.

1. During the evening of December 7, 2012 Egyptian President Mohamad Morsi, speaking in confidence, told senior advisors that he remains focused on establishing a lasting Egyptian regime under the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and its associated Freedom and Justice Party (FJP). At the same time, according to an extremely sensitive source, Morsi added that although the ongoing demonstrations against his declaration of emergency powers will continue, and, if anything, become more violent, he firmly believes that at least 60 per cent of Egyptian voters continue to support his efforts to eliminate the last vestiges of the regime of former president Hosni Mubarak. That said, Morsi admitted that the current level of violence could not continue, and might lead to more serious conflicts across the country between MB/FJP activists, and the secular/liberal anti-government demonstrators. In the opinion of these individuals MB Supreme Guide Mohammad Badie advised Morsi to moderate his immediate position on presidential authority. Badie wants Morsi to meet with anti-government leaders to see what he would have to do to calm their activities. According to Morsi, Badie and other MB leaders advised that the solution for the current situation lies in identifying the minimum he will have to give in compromise in order to regain control the situation.

2. According to this source, Badie reminded the president that during the 2011 parliamentary and presidential elections he had warned Morsi to control his FJP activists who were intimidating Christian and secular/liberal voters. Badie pointed out that Morsi's failure to accept his advice in that situation had let to unneeded tension and international criticism, just as the new government was standing up. In the opinion of this individual Morsi and his advisors spent much of the week of December 3 developing a new strategy to deal with the current situation. For the present Morsi and Egyptian Army commander General Abdel Fatah al-Sissi agree that the MB leadership must continue to do what they can to control the movement's activists. While

Morsi believes that it is important for MB supporters to demonstrate in support of the government, he agrees that they must control the number of people involved since these numbers to be directly proportional to the level of violence, according to the operatives of the Military Intelligence Service (MI -Mukhabarat el-Khabeya) sent by al-Sissi to follow the demonstrations. According to an extremely sensitive source, these MI operatives are also photographing and creating files on the leaders of the secular/liberal demonstrations, for potential future use.

3. (Source Comment: According to a sensitive source, Badie and the leadership of the MB believe they are on the verge of reaching the goal of their eighty-five (85) year campaign to gain control of the Egyptian government. While Badie and FJP parliamentary leader Saad al Katany often find Morsi a difficult partner, they are convinced that he can achieve their goals; their main concern at this time is that the judges and other administrative holdovers from the Mubarak regime could slow their efforts, far more than the secular/liberal opposition. At the same time they are also concerned that the Salafist al Nur party, their nominal parliamentary ally, might attempt to expand its authority in the government. All of these concerns relate to the belief of these MB leaders, including Morsi, that the new government must be able to reassure foreign government and business leaders that the MB/FJP regime will be a good partner in the international world. Badie told associates that Morsi had overplayed his hand by moving so abruptly to expand his position, but now there is a possibility that this overreach will work in his favor as he negotiates with opposition figures to reach an agreement to stop the violent demonstrations.)

4. According to an extremely sensitive source, Morsi's first step in this effort to gain control of the situation was to support the move by election officials to postpone the scheduled early voting for the draft constitution. Advisors to Morsi also notified contacts in the secular/liberal opposition that it was possible that the entire election could be postponed until a new, more inclusive draft constitution had been developed. In the opinion of this knowledgeable individual the key issue is a reassurance that these opposition figures will not interfere with Morsi's efforts to weed out the Mubarak appointees from all levels of the government. Al Katany for one believes this is possible since the secular/liberal leaders are also hostile to the Mubarak legacy. Al Katany added that he believes Morsi plans to offer the possibility of prosecuting or re-prosecuting some of the Mubarak officials, a move that also will be popular with the opposition. Only the former military leadership would be excused from this process, as all sides want to avoid putting al-Sissi in the position of having to defend his mentors.

5. (Source Comment: According a knowledgeable individual, Badie has instructed MB/FJP activist organizers to practice restraint, as large groups of MB supporters gathered at Mosques around the country on the afternoon of Friday December 7. The Supreme Guide asked these groups to avoid confrontation with their opponents, at least for the time being. At the same time, senior MB officials stated in confidence that Ismail Hamdi, the chairman of the national election commission, secretly met with senior advisors to Morsi during the week of December 3 and then announced a delay in the early voting on the new constitution. This move was kept secret and came as a surprise to most observers and the press. The MB/FJP publicity officers moved quickly to portray this move as the basis for a compromise in the crisis.)

6. In the opinion of this individual Morsi was disappointed but not surprised when the opposition rejected talks aimed at compromise. Some of the opposition leaders called for a sit-in demonstration at the presidential palace, but Morsi and his staff believe that they can overcome this initial reaction if they can identify opposition leaders who might be more flexible. In the meantime, Minister of Legal Affairs Mohammed Mahsoub stated that he is considering several options, including cancelling the referendum, and moving the entire process back to the parliament for a compromise and a new draft. He also hinted that Morsi could dissolve parliament; forming a new body through a special election. Morsi developed this position in an effort to set the basis for negotiation. His confidence is based on MB/FJP polling indicating that sixty to sixty five per cent of the voting public will continue to support their control of the government.

7. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this individual Morsi, his

Vice President Mahmoud Mekki and Badie are convinced that democracy advocate Mohamed el Baradei will join in compromise negotiations eventually. They note that el Baradei heads the National Salvation Front (NSF), a secular/liberal umbrella group opposed to Morsi's decrees, while encouraging the protests in Cairo. While el Baradei continues to reject offers to negotiate, Badie is convinced that the former diplomat's ambition will drive him to accept the offer eventually. In the same vein one of Morsi's greatest concerns is identifying the real leaders of the opposition.)

8. According to a particularly sensitive source, Morsi, Badie and the rest of the MB/FJP leadership realize that they must adjust their tactics for the immediate future, but they will stand by their goal of establishing long-term control of the government administrative structure, while disposing of Mubarak supporters. They will look for acceptable compromise positions, but in the end are convinced that they will emerge from this process as the leaders of Egypt. At present they continue to count on the support of al-Sissi and 60-65% of the voting populace. Their short-term goals are to gain control of the current security situation, while reassuring the foreign business and diplomatic community that although the current situation is part of a messy post-revolutionary period, the MB/FJP, and the Islamist government of Egypt will be a reasonable partner for the international community.