

RELEASE IN PART B6

From: Sidney Blumenthal [REDACTED] B6
Sent: Friday, September 14, 2012 6:32 PM
To: H
Subject: H: Morsi's private conversations today. Sid
Attachments: hrc memo morsi's private conversations 091412.docx

CONFIDENTIAL

September 14, 2012

For: Hillary
From: Sid
Re: Morsi's private conversations & coordination with Magariaf

SOURCE: Sources with direct access to the Libyan National Transitional Council, as well as the highest levels of European governments, and Western Intelligence and security services.

1. Late in the day on September 14, 2012, Egyptian President Mohamad Morsi told senior European diplomats that he is increasingly concerned the current anti-U.S. and anti-Western violence spreading through Cairo and into the rest of Egypt may be part of an effort by his Salafist political rivals to destabilize his government, which many of them believe is too moderate in its positions regarding Islam, Israel, and the non-Muslim world. According to this source, Morsi, who is in Brussels for meetings with the European Union (EU), was particularly concerned over a message from Army commander General Abdel Fatah al-Sissi, that Islamist guerrillas, believed to be drawn primarily from the Sawarki Bedouin tribe, had launched an attack on a base of the International Peacekeeping Force (IPF) in the Sinai. The General reported that the 1500 United Nations troops at the base, including some U.S. forces, were under heavy attack and casualty figures were not yet known. Morsi stated that this fight was an example of radical anti-government forces and Salafist Islamist dissidents taking advantage of the current situation to carry out attacks that demonstrate his government is unable to protect Western personnel and facilities in Egypt. Morsi stated that the success or failure of his regime is directly tied to his ability to establish a moderate Islamic state that can work with western business interests.

2. (Source Comment: In the opinion of this individual, the current wave of violence is related to an ongoing struggle between Salafist and Sufi Muslims throughout Egypt. What makes it more frustrating for Morsi is that much of the violence appears to be inspired by members of the Salafist al Nour Party, the coalition partner of Morsi's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in the new Egyptian Parliament. According to this individual, Morsi delayed condemning the initial attacks on the U.S.

Embassy out of concern that his opponents would use such a statement to move against his government. Late on the evening of September 13, 2012, Mohammed Badie, the Supreme Guide of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), sent a message to Morsi warning that he and the Supreme Guidance Council were concerned that the situation around the U.S. Embassy was getting out of control and that, difficult as it might seem, he had to take tough measures against the demonstrators, and protect the interests of the U.S. and other Western Governments. In a telephone discussion with Saad al-Katany, the MB/Freedom and Justice Party (MB/FJP) Speaker of the lower house of parliament, Morsi admitted that he had felt constrained from acting, given his past history of poor personal relations with the leaders of al Nour. Al-Katany urged him to gain control of the situation.)

3. On September 14, Morsi also stated to an EU official that he had received extremely forceful messages from both the U.S. State Department and the Office of the U.S. President, leaving no doubt in his mind that the U.S. – Egyptian relations and more than \$1 billion in U.S. aid were at stake in this matter. Morsi added that since much of this aid goes to the Egyptian Army, he and al-Katany agreed that actions that put it in jeopardy would also damage the new Egyptian administration's current good relationship with the Army. Accordingly, Morsi instructed the military and security forces to use all necessary force short of lethal measures to protect U.S. and Western facilities. In a private conversation, Morsi stated that he felt he is losing control of the political situation and fears that if the current fighting results in deaths, either of demonstrators, U.S. diplomats, Egyptian security personnel, or UN peacekeepers, the situation may spin out of control and his government could fall. Al-Katany agreed, but said that taking no action would guarantee disaster. They agreed that when the situation calms down they will have to deal with the al Nour party, which they fear will, in the future, take advantage of circumstances to try to destabilize Morsi's administration. With this in mind, Morsi ordered al-Sissi to direct the commanders of Military Intelligence (MI -Mukhabarat el-Khabeya) to step up operations collecting information on the activities of the al Nour leadership, focusing on any contacts with potentially violent Salafist dissidents.

4. (Source Comment: A separate sensitive source also noted that General al-Sissi is warning Morsi about press reports that the person who made the controversial internet film at the heart of this situation is an Egyptian Coptic Christian. The General cautioned that as this report gains wider circulation, the government and the Army must prepare for violent attacks by Islamists against that community, which makes up ten (10) percent of the Egyptian population.)

5. A separate sensitive source noted that for his part, al-Sissi is prepared to have his troops take harsh measures against any demonstrators who attack Western personnel and facilities. The General is also concerned that the al Nour leaders are even more dangerous than Morsi realizes, and he has ordered the MI to increase technical and physical surveillance of these individuals. In addition, he stated in private that Morsi and al-Katany spoke with Libyan President Mohammed Youssef el Magariaf, and they had all agreed that military and security officials in Egypt and Libya will cooperate in an effort to track links between the violence in Cairo and Benghazi. Al-Sissi has ordered Special Forces units to step up patrols in the Egypt-Libya border region, while the MI will monitor communications between dissidents; primarily Salafists, in both countries. According to this source the General is convinced that these dissidents are seizing the opportunity presented by the current unrest to move against the governments of Morsi and al-Magariaf. He also received permission from Morsi to step up cooperation with his counterparts in the U.S. and Western Europe to deal with this situation and al-Sissi believes al-Magariaf has given similar instructions to Libyan military and security officials.

6. (Source Comment: According to a separate sensitive source, al-Sissi believes that, given his new orders from Morsi, the Army can, for the most part, protect Western facilities and personnel in Egypt. But the General is concerned that the security services can never completely eliminate the

threat from small well organized bands looking to carry out terrorist attacks. Following discussion with Libyan security officials he believes they have the same concerns.)

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