

MEMMO

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U.S. Must Insist Egypt Keep Peace with Israel, Control Sinai

With the Egyptian presidential elections now over, the United States must make clear to the country's new leaders that they will be judged by their actions, including maintenance of peace with Israel and efforts to stop terrorism from Sinai. The election of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi—who co-founded the Egyptian Commission for Resisting the Zionist Project—raises serious concerns about Cairo's future commitment to peace with Israel. The Egyptian military's inability—or unwillingness—to stem terrorist attacks from Sinai against Israel is also a worrisome trend.

The election of the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi raises concern over the future of Egyptian-Israeli relations.

- While Morsi—in his first speech after being declared the new president—pledged to “preserve international accords and obligations,” he has in the past called the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty “unfair” to Egypt's interests and accused Israel of repeated violations of the treaty.
- Morsi comes from the Muslim Brotherhood, a fundamentalist Islamist movement that spawned the U.S.-designated terrorist group Hamas. The Brotherhood continues to maintain close ties with the group that now controls Gaza and has pressed for an opening of Egypt's border with the territory.
- Morsi previously served on the Zionism Resistance Council in his home governorate, and co-founded the Egyptian Commission for Resisting the Zionist Project.
- Morsi has a history of making extremist statements. “Jihad is our path,” he proclaimed during a May 13 campaign rally. “And death for the sake of Allah is our most lofty aspiration. Above all Allah is our goal.”
- Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh congratulated Morsi on his victory, saying, “This is a victory for all Arabs and Muslims, and this is God's promise to his believers.”



The newly elected president of Egypt, Mohammed Morsi, has questioned the value of the peace treaty with Israel.

The Egyptian government has failed to stem the tide of terrorism directed at Israel from Sinai.

- The Sinai, which Israel captured in the 1967 Six Day War and returned to Egypt as part of the peace agreement, has experienced a marked uptick in lawlessness, an increased presence of global jihadist groups and a dramatic increase in sophisticated weaponry.

- While Cairo previously cooperated with Israel in isolating and blocking Hamas, Egypt has done little recently to prevent the smuggling of weapons to Hamas in Gaza. Egypt's rulers have failed to maintain control of Sinai and have dramatically reduced their law enforcement in the region.
- On June 18, a cross border attack reportedly carried out by a jihadi terror group killed one Israeli contractor who was working on a security fence Israel is constructing along the border with Sinai. Israel has been forced to deploy additional forces near the border to defend against terrorist intruders.
- Last August, eight Israelis were killed when Palestinian terrorists from Gaza entered the Sinai and then launched multiple cross border attacks near the southern Israeli city of Eilat.

The Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty is the lynchpin for stability in the Middle East and has led to the strengthening of Cairo's relationship with America.

- In 1979, Egypt became the first Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel.
- Although the peace has been cold, Cairo has largely adhered to its main treaty commitments: full diplomatic relations; keeping the Sinai as a demilitarized buffer zone; permitting the presence in the Sinai of the U.S.-led Multinational Force and Observers; and maintaining freedom of navigation through the Suez Canal even for Israeli warships.
- While attacks from Sinai have increased during the past year, the Egyptian-Israeli border has remained mostly quiet since the signing of the peace treaty. Egypt's peace with Israel contributes to regional stability and has helped prevent the outbreak of war.

The United States must insist that Egypt maintain the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and reject extremism.

- With the election of the Muslim Brotherhood, the potential exists for fundamental changes in Egyptian foreign policy and an increase in anti-American and anti-Israel policies. Many Muslim Brotherhood leaders have previously made troubling comments regarding Israel and America.
- Nevertheless, this government will be judged by its actions and future U.S. policies should depend on those actions.
- The United States must insist that Egypt maintain the peace treaty with Israel, including maintaining diplomatic contacts, preventing the Sinai from becoming a terrorist safe haven and launching pad for terrorism against Israel and allowing the continued presence of the U.S.-led Multinational Force and Observers in the Sinai.
- Under U.S. law, Egypt risks losing its annual U.S. aid package if it does not uphold the peace treaty with Israel.