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The Truth About the Muslim Brotherhood

**Is it a moderate Egyptian party committed to democracy . . .
or a jihadist group seeking to create an Islamist empire?**

With the Muslim Brotherhood's Mohammed Morsi now president of Egypt, many wonder whether he will promote democracy and Middle East peace. But what do the Muslim Brotherhood's history and its leaders' pronouncements tell us? Is their goal to create a free democratic system . . . or hijack democracy in the service of an Islamist revolution?

What are the facts?

Founded in Egypt in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood has been an immensely powerful force in Middle East politics, now boasting chapters in 80 countries. Its mission statement: "Allah is our objective; the Quran is our constitution, the Prophet is our leader; Jihad is our way; and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations."

The Brotherhood's founder, Hassan al-Banna, stated that the group's goal was to create an empire governed by Islamic religious law and an autocratic caliphate. He claimed "It is in the nature of Islam to dominate, not to be dominated, to impose its law on all nations and to extend its power to the entire planet."

In 1948, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood assassinated the Egyptian Prime Minister, and the group was banned in Egypt in 1954, after it attempted to assassinate Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser. A Brotherhood splinter group assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

The Muslim Brotherhood's most influential leader was Sayyid Qutb, a racist, anti-Semite, misogynist and hater of the United States. His pro-Islamist and anti-Western hatred had enormous influence on Ayman Zawahiri, who went on to become a key mentor of Osama bin Laden and is today the number-two leader of al-Qaeda.

Despite its murderous history, the Muslim Brotherhood claims to have renounced violence—but it makes notable exceptions, including approval of terrorist acts by its Palestinian wing, Hamas, whose charter calls for the murder of Jews and the obliteration of Israel. What's more, former Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Commander Muhammed Madhi Akef declared he was "prepared to send 10,000 jihad fighters immediately to fight at the side of Hezbollah" during the Lebanese terrorist group's 2006 war against Israel.

Given its history of murder and warlike declarations, the Brotherhood's claim to non-violence rings false. Consider finally a September 2010 sermon by Muslim Supreme Guide Muhammed Badi, who explained the "change that the [Muslim] nation seeks can only be attained through jihad . . . by raising a jihadi generation that pursues death just as our enemies pursue life."

While some pundits minimize the Muslim Brotherhood's threat, there's no doubt that the group fanatically opposes the United States, Israel and Western values, or that it will use both democratic and violent means to defeat them. Nor should we doubt that the Brotherhood is a powerful, well-organized political force that, if given enough power, would use it to crush the democratic process and turn Egypt into an anti-Western, fundamentalist Islamic state. Can we afford this risk?

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FLAME

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While many pundits have declared the Brotherhood a moderate group, it is working rapidly to seize absolute control of Egypt, starting with a new constitution that favors Islamists and gives president Morsi power to name the prime minister, Supreme Court judges and heads of all public institutions. Parliamentary elections, to have been held in February, are

postponed indefinitely. There have been four times as many "insulting the president" lawsuits in Morsi's first days in office than in all 30 years of former president Hosni Mubarek's reign.

We know that the Bolsheviks in Russia, Nazis in Germany, Islamists in Iran, and Hamas in the disputed Palestinian territories all started out as

minority parties whose rise to power during political upheaval began democratically and ended in dictatorship—following the insidious pattern of "one man, one vote, one time." Given the Muslim Brotherhood's Islamist philosophy, we can expect the same in Egypt.

What can we expect from the president Morsi's government? In 2006, the Muslim Brotherhood demanded that Egypt develop nuclear weapons. Recently a Brotherhood leader told interviewers that abolishing the Egyptian peace treaty with Israel would be one of the new government's first orders of business and that Egypt should prepare for war with Israel. In 2010 Morsi himself called on Egyptians to "nurse our children and grandchildren on hatred" of Jews and referred to Zionists as "descendants of apes and pigs."

For Christians, who make up 10 percent of the Egyptian population and continue to be victims of violent attacks, rule by the Brotherhood is a nightmare, curtailing their rights to worship publicly or hold high office. As for women, the Brotherhood insists that they be segregated, their bodies covered in public, and that girls undergo genital mutilation.

To assess the Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to democracy, we should heed the words of its Spiritual Leader Yusuf al-Qaradawi, who maintains that "The civilizational-jihadist process . . . is a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house . . . so that it is eliminated and God's religion is made victorious over all other religions."

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