

President Al-Sisi of Egypt: “The Muslim Brotherhood is the Origin of it All”



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Source Rena Effendi/Institute/Der Spiegel

Yesterday, *Der Spiegel* published, an [“Interview with Egyptian President Sisi: ‘Extremists Offend the Image of God’](#). It purports to be a wide ranging interview . It covers his role in orchestrating the ouster of President Morsi, continuing internal problems with human rights and popular support for his regime. It reflects his independent foreign relations, problems with the Obama Administration, the connections between the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) and the Islamic State in the Sinai Peninsula, Ansar Bayt al-Maqdis.

Overall, Al-Sisi responded ably to a battery of questions that were contrived to portray him as the new autocratic leader in Egypt. This is emblematic of the country’s military origins of previous Presidents , Gamal Abdel Nasser, Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. Mubarak was just freed from imprisonment under ousted President Morsi.

President Al-Sisi caught the world’s attention with critical comments about reform of Islamic doctrine made to senior Clerics at Sunni theology bastion, Al Azhar University on New Years’ Day 2015. On Coptic Christmas eve , January 6th, he demonstrated what he meant by visiting with His Holiness Pope Tawadros II of Alexandria at a Cairo cathedral wishing both him and all Copts a “Merry Christmas.”



Russian President Putin and Egyptian President Al-Sisi, Cairo 2-10-15

Source: *IBTimes U.K.*

Today Al-Sisi demonstrated some of his independent foreign relations when he received Russian President Putin, in Cairo for a two day official state visit, where they [concluded](#) a deal for construction of Egypt's first nuclear reactor. Doubtless, Al-Sisi's action would not inure him to the Obama Administration seeking to reign in nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. An Administration that persists in bringing Egyptian MB clerics to confer with the National Security Council and State Department . The Obama White House is engaged in a myopic search for 'messaging' to combat "violent extremism" among members of a "barbaric, criminal, nihilistic enterprise" , the Islamic State or ISIL . A threat, unlike President Al-Sisi, the Administration refuses to identify as derived from doctrinal Islam.

In our February 2015 NER [interview](#) with Egypt expert , Dr. Raymond Stock, Shillman Writing fellow at the Middle East Forum, he presented these assessments of President Al-Sisi:

"[Al-Sisi] was saying that Islam as it is being taught and practiced by its leading religious scholars has given birth to a globally destructive ideology which is now threatening us all."

"And he challenged the clerics to take the lead in that effort by openly re-examining their own teachings and source materials for interpreting Islam."

"[The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood] is far from dead and remains a threat to the Egyptian state and society."

"[The Muslim Brotherhood] has deeply bonded with the

highest levels of the Obama administration, which uncritically backed its creation of an elected, one-party dictatorship under Morsi.”

“Obama’s backing of the Islamists and his cutting of aid for the past two years have driven al-Sisi to radically diversify Egypt’s sources of funding and investment from abroad, including for the first time military aid.”

“Unlike Morsi and the MB, who worked covertly with the terrorists in Sinai, al-Sisi wholeheartedly supports the peace with Israel.”

We bring you these excerpts from the *Der Spiegel* interview that affirms the views of Dr. Stock in our NER interview:

SPIEGEL: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Morsi supposedly made you chief of staff in 2013 because you are a pious Muslim.

Sisi: I don’t know the criteria by which Morsi chose me. I have never pretended I was someone else. I am a simple person and my nature is to read a lot and contemplate a lot. I was especially interested in religious discourse. We need to examine this discourse while taking into consideration the backdrop of the current state of affairs in the region. I address this issue even if it means putting my hand in the hornet’s nest.

SPIEGEL: When you recently addressed scholars at the famous Azhar University, you called for religious renewal.

Sisi: This religious discourse will take a lot of time. It must emanate from the recognition that we have a problem. We are talking here about the most precious thing for Arab and Muslim countries, because religion is engrained in the hearts and minds of the people.

SPIEGEL: Do you mean a reinterpretation of the Koran or of the Islamic legal and moral code known as Sharia?

Sisi: For 1,400 years, the Koran has represented the absolute truth. But interpretations differ. I propose removing wrong and distorted ideas from the religious discourse. Two days ago, I took part in a conference attended by not only Azhar's highest authorities but also the Coptic Pope, intellectuals and politicians. The subject was "freedom of choice" and the great gift that this freedom represents. The right to choose a particular faith, whether Christian, Jewish or Muslim, is an inherent part of our religion.

SPIEGEL: Does this mean Muslims should take action against those who falsely interpret their religion?

Sisi: Of course, because these extremists not only insult Islam, they also offend the image of God, the all-mighty. Their false beliefs lead many people to ask themselves: What kind of a religion is this Islam?

SPIEGEL: US President Barack Obama has assembled an international coalition to fight Islamic State extremists. But Egypt is only a symbolic partner in this alliance.

Sisi: We are a partner in this battle, but we are waging it here in Egypt. We had already begun our fight one and a half years before the formation of the coalition. If we fail in this fight against terrorism, the entire region will be embroiled in turmoil for the next 50 years. Europe will also be threatened with attacks by the extremists. I already told my European friends this, one and a half years ago.

SPIEGEL: And how did they react?

Sisi: They didn't want to believe me. They thought I was trying to justify what had happened here ...

SPIEGEL: ... for the removal of President Morsi from office. Now there is even an offshoot of Islamic State in Sinai

that is threatening your country's unity.

Sisi: About 600,000 people live on the whole of Sinai, and the terrorists are only a fraction of that. They cannot threaten the unity of Egypt. They are only attracting attention because their actions are so diabolical. We are determined to fight the terrorists.

SPIEGEL: What is the greater threat: the Islamic State or the Muslim Brotherhood?

Sisi: They both share the same ideology. But the Muslim Brotherhood is the origin of all of it. All these other extremists emanated from them.

President Al-Sisi, in his final comment about the MB and ISIS threat, appears to follow the same argument that Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu [used](#) in his September 2014 UN General Assembly speech saying, "When it comes to its ultimate goals, Hamas is ISIS, and ISIS is Hamas. . . . ISIS, Hamas are Branches of Same Tree."