

UNITED STATES TREATMENT OF THE MILITANT MIDDLE EAST

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America, as stated in our national anthem, is the land of the free and the home of the brave. We boast proudly to the world that we are courageous and strong, that we take on the problems of others and lead the fight for global freedom. We have instructed those suffering in persecution to put their faith in us. Yet we sit idly by as the ones who reject our beliefs savagely curtail the rights of men, women, and children across the world for the same mores. These liberties I speak of can be boiled down to one, the most basic of them all, the right to live. Around the globe and in recent history people have been taunted by death threats, captured by radical extremists and government employed militants, and eventually killed by such captors. Though this is a recurring theme in the world, superpowers such as the United States have refused to act in times of great peril time and time again, often choosing to send figureheads to put on airs to instill hope in the hearts of people, but more often than not, never delivering. Let us hope that we do not pay for our President's foreign relations blunders with apathy in our most desperate time of need against Jihad.

In order to understand the full extent of the current US President's efforts with the Middle East, it is important to start at the beginning. In 2009, President Obama made his first international speech in Cairo, Egypt not 8 days after his election. In hindsight, this speech in Cairo is regarded with little more than pity. President Obama's inaugural foreign policy speech showed how ill prepared the President was to tackle the beast of the Middle East. President Obama states that the United States will not "turn our backs on the legitimate Palestinian aspiration for dignity, opportunity, and a state of their own...just as Israel's right to exist cannot be denied, neither can Palestine's." The fundamental misunderstanding here is that the two can coexist. While the nation of Israel exists, the statehood of Palestine may not come to fruition because of the issue of self-determination. Palestine is and was not a nation recognized by the United Nations, though its individual states are, it is a group of Arab people and nations that identify as one. By promoting the statehood of Palestine, the President showed blatant disregard of the right to self-determination of every nation. This is the same argument held by the PLO saying the statehood of Israel is not legal due to Palestine's right to self-determination. Though it is important to remember which of the two is the internationally recognized state. The President made a grave error in this statement by making it seem that the United States would back the Palestine Liberation Organization's agenda, while claiming allied relations with Israel.

One of the most unsettling facts about the speech is not that the President claimed women's rights were not an issue in the area, despite what former British Ambassador Charles Crawford says about Egypt being the top of the list for female genital mutilation with "a staggering 80 percent of women 15-19 according to WHO statistics," but that members of the Muslim Brotherhood who were expelled from power in the country were

given front row seats. At this point in time in 2009, the Muslim Brotherhood were stripped of *de jure* power in Egypt, but unfortunately held on to some *de facto*. Despite this, it seemed that Egypt was at least taking a stance against Hamas. However, when looking at the current state of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt it is hard not to wonder, was this simple act of seating arrangement just the right show of respect and recognition that the Muslim Brotherhood needed to regain power in Egypt? Not two years after President Obama's speech in Cairo, the Muslim Brotherhood was able to overthrow President Mubarak and replace him with their own, Mohammed Morsi who was consequently ousted for matters of treason and collaboration with Hezbollah, and Hamas, only one short year into his term. The Council on Foreign Relations' Ed Husain writes that, "the outcome of Egypt's experiment in reconciling political Islam with modern government will have regional consequences, inspiring renewed violence by Islamists who feel shortchanged by democracy and secularism." Now, just six years after his speech in Cairo and setting the stage with the Muslim Brotherhood, President Obama is faced with waging a war with the Islamic State. As Amotz Asa El of the Jerusalem Post states that President Obama's "war effort" in the Islamic State "may generate true victory over a true enemy representing a real problem for the entire world. Should that happen, the man who took to the podium in Cairo eager to appease the Muslim world, will end up etched in missions of Muslim minds as Enemy no. 1".

This is the reality of the world today. The United States is currently under the leadership of a President with seemingly little know how to wage war with the unstable Islamic State. The President's lack of comprehending even the fundamentals of the problems in the Arab world does not bode well for the future of Israel. President Obama's 2009 speech in Cairo entitled "New Beginning", detailed the President's ineptitude in the realm of foreign relations. The President's new beginning quickly unraveled into a bitter end as evidenced in the power struggle of Egypt. Despite the shortcomings of my country on behalf of those persecuted by Islamic nations, I am proud to be an American because there is one major point in the fundamentals of being American and it is as follows: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." – Declaration of Independence.

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