

Why did Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit say Obama confided he's still a practicing Muslim?

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Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul Gheit said in a national news broadcast that Barack Obama quietly confirmed to him his Muslim faith.

Libya's eccentric and aging dictator Moammar Gadhafi says he's convinced Obama is a Muslim.

The Israeli press is worried. His prejudices against Israel are difficult to explain – as is his apparent devotion to 86-year-old Saudi Arabian King Abdullah.

During an interview on Egypt's Nile-TV, Gheit said he had a one-on-one meeting with Obama, where the U.S. President told him that he was still a Muslim, the son of a Muslim father, the step-son of a Muslim stepfather, that his half brothers in Kenya are Muslims and that he is sympathetic to the Muslim agenda.

Gheit has served as the Foreign Minister of Egypt since July 2004 when the government of Ahmed Nazif took office. Gheit previously served as Egypt's ambassador to the United Nations. In December 2005 he served as a mediator of the Chad-Sudan conflict.

He told the Egyptian press that Obama told him that Arabs must show patience and that Obama promised that once he overcame some domestic issues, like the health-care reform, he would show the Muslim World how to deal with Israel.

Gadhafi believes Obama is Muslim

Gadhafi at a rally marking the anniversary of President Reagan's 1986 air raid on Libya, said of Obama: "Along came a black citizen of Kenyan African origins, a Muslim, who had studied in an Islamic school in Indonesia. His name is Obama." Gadhafi's remarks, translated by the Middle East Media Research Institute, were aired on the Arab news network al-Jazeera.

Whether he is a Muslim or not doesn't matter to them, say Israeli officials – but what concerns them is his causing an abrupt change in official American attitudes toward Israel.

"Although Israeli officials publicly play down the crisis in relations between Jerusalem and Washington," writes Israeli journalist Aviel Schneider, "privately the language is much different. Sources close to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu describe Obama as a 'strategic catastrophe' for Israel."

At the root of the problem may be the deep influence that Saudi King Abdullah has on Obama.

Of course, there are those famous photos of Obama in Islamic dress for family ceremonies and the others of him bowing down to the Saudi ruler. Islamic scholars say that such a bow is appropriate for a devout Muslim since Abdullah is the guardian of the holy city of Mecca, from which Mohammed ascended into heaven.

According to the subscription-only news website GeoStrategy-Direct, diplomatic sources say that Obama has pledged to Saudi King Abdullah that America will do whatever it takes to ensure an Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Jerusalem over the next 18 months.

Abdullah apparently has convinced Obama that in return, he can get the Taliban to end the war in Afghanistan, which would be a major foreign affairs coup for Obama.

Abdullah also has apparently convinced Obama that Israel's withdrawal to pre-1967 borders will demonstrate to the Muslim world that Abdullah is more powerful than Iran.

On June 29, Abdullah met Obama in the White House, their third meeting since Obama took office.

The sources told GeoStrategy-Direct that early in the Obama administration, Abdullah expressed opposition to U.S. arms sales to Israel.

So sales stopped

Since then, the White House has rejected virtually every Israeli request for U.S. weapons. Obama has delayed delivery of weapons promised by George W. Bush, including attack helicopters, air transports, bunker-buster air bombs and Hellfire air-to-ground missiles.

"The king wants to have from Obama the assurance that he is going to solve the Arab-Israeli issue," said Khaled Al Maena, editor of the Saudi-owned *Arab News*.

Sources told GeoStrategy.com that Abdullah has shown impatience with Obama, prompted by Saudi concern over Iran's nuclear weapons program. They said Riyadh has been alarmed by Washington's failure to stop Teheran's ballistic missile and nuclear projects and instead pursue diplomacy with Iran.

"We see the issue in the shorter term because we are closer to the threat," Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Saudi Al Faisal said. "We need an immediate resolution."

"The Saudis are terrified of Iran, but they can't bring themselves to admit that they need help," a source said. "What they would rather do is publicly show how they are using Washington to do what Iran could never achieve – a full Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders without an Arab peace agreement."

Officials in the Israeli Prime Minister's Office don't know what is going on, but have spoken on condition of anonymity to Israel's top newspapers, says Schneider. They have said they view the Obama administration as a serious threat to the future of the State of Israel.

Israel is very worried that America is abandoning them

Officially, Israel and the U.S. have a "strategic partnership that is unbreakable." However, in reality, the criticism coming out of Israel is blunt to say the least.

"President Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton have drawn a clear line, supporting the Palestinian position at the expense of Israel," said one Netanyahu confidant. "It is insane, it is sick. Relations between Jerusalem and Washington are simply disastrous; the situation has never been so dangerous. This U.S. President wants to establish a Palestinian state at any price and hand them Jerusalem on a silver platter."

"Netanyahu has repeatedly distanced himself from such statements," writes Schneider. However, the concerns are there.

"Israel's relations with the U.S. are at a low point, and Obama poses a danger to Israel," wrote journalist Nahum Barnea in Israel's biggest newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*. The feeling among the Israeli public is that Obama is appeasing the Muslim world at the expense of Israel.

Furthermore, "General David Petraeus, the head of U.S. Central Command, said Israel's intransigence on resolving the conflict with the Palestinians is endangering U.S. forces in Iraq and Afghanistan," noted Schneider.

Even members of the U.S. Congress are concerned about the abrupt turnaround in U.S.-Israeli relations.

Congress worried

Three-quarters of the House of Representatives, 337 of 435 members, signed a bipartisan letter to Hillary Clinton expressing “deep concern over recent tension” between Israel and America. They urged that it be smoothed over quickly and in private.

“Obama is a real problem for Israel,” a senior official told *Yediot*. “He is Israel’s biggest strategic catastrophe.”

The newspaper also quoted another Israeli official who fears that under Obama, Washington has switched sides.

“The Obama White House is putting pressure only on Israel but does not expect anything from the Palestinians,” he said. “These American demands are unacceptable.”

Recently Netanyahu invited Nobel Prize-winning author and Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel to his private residence in Caesaria. He urged Wiesel, who is an American citizen, to make it clear to Obama how important Jerusalem is to the Jewish people.

“The president of the World Jewish Congress has written a letter to Obama urging him to end friction with Israel,” reports Ken Timmerman, writing for NewsMax.

That letter, written by WJC President Ronald S. Lauder, “displayed anxiety over the change Obama has imposed on U.S. foreign policy,” reports Timmerman.

“Our concern grows to alarm as we consider some disturbing questions,” Lauder wrote to Obama.

Among the issues was the administration’s inclination to blame Israel for stalled Middle East peace talks, when “it is the Palestinians, not Israel, who refuse to negotiate,” Lauder stated.

Ignoring history

“The administration’s desire to improve relations with the Muslim world is well known,” Lauder added, “but is friction with Israel part of this new strategy? Is it assumed worsening relations with Israel can improve relations with Muslims?”

“History is clear on the matter: appeasement does not work. It can achieve the opposite of what is intended.”

The growing friction between the Obama administration and Israel has begun to have an impact on American Jewish voters, who supported Obama by 78 percent in the 2008 election, according Timmerman.

“A new McLaughlin poll released last week shows that among Jews who voted for Obama only 42 percent would vote for him again, while 46 percent would consider voting for someone else.”

Members of Israel’s Inner Security Cabinet told Timmerman they feared that Obama’s hostility toward Israel is deep-rooted.

Some have wondered if it goes back to his attending Muslim private schools in Indonesia as a child.

The White House is dismissive of any report that Obama is or ever has been a Muslim.

They cite his membership at the Rev. Jeremiah Wright’s United Church of Christ.