



The three top Egyptian Presidential candidates exude the peace the Arab Spring has brought us. Fotouh: "Israel is an enemy." Morsi: "Jihad is our path and death in the name of Allah is our goal". Moussa: "Most of our people consider it [Israel] an enemy".

Egyptian riots May 4, 2012

When Egypt's election commission published the final list of those who will be allowed to run in the first presidential election since the ousting of President Hosni Mubarak last year, the list ended up with 13 names out of 23 that had initially applied.

Two high-profile candidates have been barred, Omar Suleiman, the former vice president and spy chief under Hosni Mubarak and Khairat al-Shater, the main nominee of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Suleiman was deemed ineligible because he had not submitted enough endorsing signatures to qualify. Shater was disqualified because he had been imprisoned and Egyptian law bans criminal convicts from running for president.

After Shater was disqualified the Muslim Brotherhood nominated their backup, Mohamed Morsi, the Chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party and former member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau.

Two others of the Egyptian presidential front-runners faced off during the country's first televised presidential debate on Thursday. The hot topics were religion, Islamic law and Israel.



A photo supplied by the Egyptian newspaper shows Egypt's presidential candidates Amr Moussa (r) and Abdel Moneim Abu Fotouh (l) during a televised presidential debate in Cairo, Egypt, 10 May 2012. (Photo: EPA)

Amr Moussa faced off against Abdel Fotouh and the statements these two made and the points they agreed on give us a view to Egypt's as well as the Middle East's future.

Moussa is the one-time Arab League chief and former foreign minister under Hosni Mubarak. Moussa is considered to be a moderate, and many experts see him as the favorite for Egyptians. If this guy is the "moderate" we need not look for a radical.

The Islamist candidate, Abdul Moneim Aboul Fotouh is a former leading figure in the Muslim Brotherhood who many fear will impose an Islamic state should he be elected. Fotouh was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau from 1987 - 2009. In 2011 he formally quit all political work with the Muslim Brotherhood and resigned from its membership, when he decided to run for president.

Do I really need to explain what will come of Egypt after these elections? I have been writing and speaking out on this since before the previous President, Hosni Mubarak was ousted.

During the debate both candidates agreed that the constitution should be guided by Sharia, or Islamic law. That in and of itself should be enough to make any one shudder who understands Sharia.

At one point Moussa asked Fotouh about religious freedom and Christianity, as reported by Egypt's [Ahram online](#) ,

"You once said in a televised interview that Muslims can convert to Christianity and vice versa... is this still your position?"

Abul-Fotouh, taken aback, waffled at first and then stressed the importance of freedom of belief and of a moderate understanding of Islam. He, however, fought back and attempted to corner Moussa and paint him as too secular.

Moussa was twice asked: "What do you mean by the general principles of Sharia?" After equivocating, the one-time Arab League chief insisted that the general principles of Islamic Sharia law, as they existed in the 1971 constitution, should be applied.

"We want to know your vision about applying Sharia law, especially as you are now backed by radical Islamist groups; and in politics nothing is for free, there must be a deal and we need to know," Moussa shot back.

It seems like a comedy and if it weren't true it might actually be laughable. One radical candidate accusing the other of being "now backed by radical Islamist groups".

When it comes to Israel and the peace treaty that has been in place with Egypt since 1979 they agree wholeheartedly,

Abul-Fotouh stated, "Israel is an enemy which is built on occupation, owns 200 nuclear warheads, doesn't respect international decisions and attacks religious symbols. The majority of Egyptians are enemies of Israel. The agreement with Israel should be revised and the sections which are against our interests should be removed immediately and only what's in our interests should stay."

He also called Israel a "racist state" during an [interview](#) Saturday with the private Egyptian CBC satellite station; he said he had opposed the treaty since its implementation.

"I still view the peace treaty as a national security threat to Egypt, and it must be revised."

What's more, he said that al-Qaeda leader Osama Bin Laden's assassination by US Special Forces was an act of "state terrorism". Yeah, I can already see the love this guy has for the U.S.

Moussa has also been a critic of Israel both as foreign minister and Arab League chief and agreed that most Egyptians view the Jewish state as an enemy,

"We have lots of disagreements. Most of our people consider it an enemy, but the responsibility of the president is to deal with such things responsibly and not run after hot-headed slogans."

According to Ahram online the highlight of the show was when Moussa described Iran as an Arab country, Fotouh stated,

"Our relationship with Iran is based on our own independence. I am not against a relationship with Iran provided it doesn't proselytize the Shia faith in Egypt and likewise we shouldn't try to spread the Sunni faith there."

Moussa had a short answer, wrong, but short,

"I am against a war with Iran. Iran is an Arab country! And we have to listen and talk."

Mr. Moussa, far be it for me to correct you, a former foreign minister of Egypt and Secretary General of the League of Arab States, but... Iran is not an Arab country and if you really want to tick off an Iranian, tell him he is.

Of all the Middle Eastern peoples conquered by the Arabs, the Iranians did not lose their language or their identity. Even today, ethnic Persians make up 60 percent of modern Iran, and modern Persian is the official language. In addition, the majority of Iranians that are Muslim are Shiite Muslims while most Arabs are Sunni Muslims.

If you don't believe me check the list of the Arab League members. They are as follows, Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, the Palestine Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Notice the one country missing from the list? Iran. But I digress.

The third front runner for the President of Egypt is no different from the other two when it comes to Sharia and Israel. Mohamed Morsi, as I mentioned earlier, was the Chairman of the Freedom and Justice Party and former member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Guidance Bureau.

The NY Times [wrote](#) of him back in April,

Mr. Morsi has campaigned explicitly both as a more conservative Islamist and as a loyal executor of Mr. Shater's plans.

In a [speech](#) before Cairo University students just this past Saturday night, Morsi stated such loving lines; I have to admit that I myself cannot choose between these three gems. He stated,

"The Koran is our constitution, the Prophet is our leader, jihad is our path and death in the name of Allah is our goal."

"Today Egypt is close as never before to the triumph of Islam at all the state levels."

"Today we can establish Sharia law because our nation will acquire well-being only with Islam and Sharia. The Muslim Brothers and the Freedom and Justice Party will be the conductors of these goals."

The first round of Egypt's presidential election is scheduled for May 23 and 24. The president will be elected to a four-year term.

There are a total of 13 candidates for the President of Egypt and we all know how lucky 13 is, but the 3 above are the frontrunners and more than likely one of them will emerge the victor.

But I guess we really have nothing to worry about, our administration knows what they are doing when it comes to Egypt. Let's not forget that Obama bypassed Congress and gave them over \$1.5 billion in aid of your tax dollars just this past March.

As was [reported](#) by the Washington Post March 22,

The Obama administration has decided to resume funding for Egypt's military and will bypass congressional requirements that U.S. officials certify the country's progress toward democracy, according to Capitol Hill aides.

This year's allocation of aid — more than \$1.5 billion, with the bulk earmarked for the military — was withheld amid the country's crackdown on pro-democracy groups, including several U.S.-based organizations with close ties to political parties in Washington.

Yes, we're in good hands. What could possibly go wrong? After all, 13 is such a lucky number.