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WARNING: TOPIC: INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL, LEADER, MILITARY
SERIAL: EUL2013083034056541

BODY

COUNTRY: EGYPT, ISRAEL, TURKEY

SUBJ: (U//~~FOUO~~) COMMENTARY: ISRAEL DID NOT ENGINEER EGYPT COUP,
BUT
Is Glad It Happened

SOURCE: Washington Al-Monitor in English 27 Aug 13

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TEXT:

[(U//~~FOUO~~) Commentary by Mustafa Akyol: "Erdogan, Egypt's Coup And
the Israeli Connection"]

[INTERNET]

[OSC Transcribed Text]

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When Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan argued, in an Aug.
20 speech, that Israel is "behind" the military coup in Egypt, he
certainly did not make a great impression in the West. Various
media

commentators, including a contributor to Al-Monitor, blamed him for
bigotry against the Jewish state, even likening him to Borat, the
notorious anti-Semitic character played by Sacha Baron Cohen in the
famous 2006 mockumentary. Meanwhile, White House spokesman Josh
Earnest criticized Erdogan's comment as "offensive and
unsubstantiated and wrong."

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Yet I still wonder, despite all the urge for political correctness, whether Erdogan was really delusional on this issue. Was he, in other words, really out of touch with reality when he pointed to a link between Egypt's coup and Israel's agenda? Let's see. First, I should admit that Erdogan's "evidence" for his claim, a 2011 press conference by Israeli Justice Minister Tzipi Livni and French philosopher Bernard-Henri Levy, is actually irrelevant. As it can be seen on YouTube, this "evidence" only proves that Levy, out of a peculiar commitment to "democratic values," supports secular-leaning military coups against elected Islamist parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood. This certainly does not prove an actual collaboration between Egypt's bloody coup and Levy, let alone the Israeli government. (In fact, one must at least give Levy credit for condemning "the bloodbath" perpetrated by "Gen. Abdel Fattah al-Sisi and his acolytes" in an Aug. 20 piece of his.) However, a mere sketch of Middle East news of the past few weeks suggests that Erdogan perhaps was onto something with his controversial remarks, although he neither articulated nor substantiated it well. For example, on Aug. 18 The New York Times published a story titled, "Israel Escalating Efforts to Shape Allies' Strategy."

"Israel plans this week to intensify its diplomatic campaign urging Europe and the United States to support the military-backed government in Egypt despite its deadly crackdown on Islamist protesters, according to a senior Israeli official involved in the effort," the article read.

The same article noted that it was Michael B. Oren, Israel's ambassador to the United States, "who has been forcefully arguing for sustaining Washington's \$1.5 billion annual aid to Egypt since the July 3 ouster of President Mohammed Morsi." A similar observation came from American journalist John Hudson as well, in a Foreign Policy piece titled, "Egypt's Rulers Have a New Friend in DC: The Israel Lobby." Accordingly, it was AIPAC -- the voice of the

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Israeli
right in the US capital -- which was "operating behind the scenes
in
private meetings with lawmakers to keep alive Cairo's funding."

Meanwhile, former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, although not currently in power, probably aired the mainstream view in Israel by urging "the free world" to "support the new Egyptian government" -- or, more precisely, the illegal military regime that has murdered hundreds of peaceful protesters.

In fact, Western media has no shortage of observations about Israel's support for Egypt's coup. Patrick Smith, a veteran journalist and writer for Salon, argued that "Israel's intolerance of an Islamic party -- Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood -- in power next door" is quite evident. He even suggested that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu may have "wanted Morsi's head before he agreed to any talks with the Palestinians."

Of course, none of this proves a conspiratorial link between Tel Aviv and Cairo -- that Israel planned and orchestrated the flow of events -- if that is what Erdogan meant when he said, "Israel is behind the coup." But Israel is behind the coup, in the sense of supporting it enthusiastically. This of course puts the Jewish state in an odd category of states that are also happily "behind" the coup, such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE. Those "Islamic" (in effect, absolute) monarchies have their own reasons, to be sure, for supporting the violent overthrow of the Muslim Brotherhood: The "democracy plus Islamism" formula that the Muslim Brotherhood implies is a lethal threat to their patrimonial rule. They are thus ready to do anything to contain this relatively more modern synthesis of Islam and politics in the Sunni world.

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Israel has its own reason, as well, for supporting the overthrow and the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood: a "deep-seated suspicion towards Islamism," as I probed before in Al-Monitor. But it is a shortsighted view, I must say, which only creates a vicious cycle: As long as Israel acts as the supporter of the secular-leaning despots who oppress the Islamists, those Islamists will hate and grow more agitated by Israel. And more agitation against Israel will bring more suffering to Jews and their Arab neighbors.

There must be a way out, and perhaps it is rooted in nowhere other than the ancient wisdom of Judaism itself: "Don't do unto others," as Hillel the Elder said, "what you would not want done to you." In other words, Israel should wish for the Arabs not bloody military coups, but the same pluralist democracy it has built for itself -- in which religious fundamentalists are accommodated and appeased, and certainly not oppressed and massacred by tyrants in uniform.

[Description of Source: Washington Al-Monitor in English -- Website hosting exclusive articles by prominent writers from Israel, the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, Iraq, and Turkey; URL: <http://www.al-monitor.com>]

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