



OBAMA ADMIN GOING AHEAD WITH F-16 SHIPMENT TO MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD-RULED EGYPT

By: Sharona Schwartz - December 11, 2012

The ongoing civil strife in Egypt, its Muslim Brotherhood president grabbing sweeping powers, and a cooling of relations with Israel don't seem to be making much of an impression on the Defense Department's foreign military aid decisions.

The Obama administration is going ahead with a delivery of 20 F-16 fighter jets to the Muslim Brotherhood-led country, even as Amnesty International is calling "dangerous" President Mohammed Morsi's decision to grant the military the power to arrest civilians protesting against him.

Fox News reports the 20 F-16s are part of a \$1 billion foreign aid package:

The first four jets are to be delivered to Egypt beginning Jan. 22, a source at the naval air base in Fort Worth, where the planes have been undergoing testing, told FoxNews.com. The North African nation already has a fleet of more than 200 of the planes and the latest shipment merely fulfills an order placed two years ago. But given the uncertainty in Cairo, some critics wonder if it is wise to be sending more top gun planes.

"Should an overreaction [by Egypt] spiral into a broader conflict between Egypt and Israel, such a scenario would put U.S. officials in an embarrassing position of having supplied massive amounts of military hardware ... to both belligerents," said Malou Innocent, a foreign policy analyst at the Cato Institute. "Given Washington's fiscal woes, American taxpayers should no longer be Egypt's major arms supplier."

The U.S. government ordered and paid for the fighter jets for Egypt's military as part of foreign aid for Egypt back in 2010, when Hosni Mubarak ruled. The fighter jets were supposed to be delivered in 2013, and delivery will go ahead as scheduled even though Hosni Mubarak has been removed from power and replaced by Mohamed Morsi, who led the Muslim Brotherhood before becoming Egypt's president.

Among the decision's critics, Rick Moran of The American Thinker writes:

Considering the fact that the Egyptian military has just aligned themselves with President Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood, this is a stupid, stupid, move.[...]

The question a third grader might ask is, "Who are those planes more likely to be used against? Iran or Israel?" Unfortunately, there was no third grader around that our procurement folks at the State Department could ask so we are apparently going to arm a military whose political leader headed up an organization that has vowed to destroy Israel.

A Pentagon spokesman is defending the sale. "The U.S.-Egypt defense relationship has served as the cornerstone of our broader strategic partnership for over thirty years," Lt. Col. Wesley Miller told Fox. "The delivery of the first set of F-16s in January 2013 reflects the U.S. commitment to supporting the Egyptian military's modernization efforts. Egyptian acquisition of F-16s will increase our militaries' interoperability, and enhance Egypt's capacity to contribute to regional mission sets," he added.