

# Los Angeles Times

## It's no joke: Morsi gets two days to solve Egypt's problems

By: Paul Whitefield – July 1, 2013

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Think President Obama has it tough, dealing with recalcitrant Republicans in Congress? Then imagine what it would be like if the Joint Chiefs were on his back too.

In Cairo on Monday, Egyptians awoke to this statement about their volatile political situation:

“The armed forces is warning that if the demands of the people are not fulfilled ... [it] will announce a future road map and procedures that it will supervise.”

Those ominous words were read on national television by Gen. Abdel Fattah Sisi, defense minister and chief of the armed forces. They were directed at both the country's president, Mohamed Morsi, and opposition forces.

And Sisi wasn't finished. Saying that “wasting more time will only achieve more division and conflict,” he added:

“The armed forces repeats the invitation to fulfill the demands of the people and gives everyone 48 hours as a last chance to begin bearing the burdens of this historic circumstance.”

So, no pressure or anything, President Morsi. Take your time. You got a couple of days to straighten the country out. Otherwise, there's going to be a new pharaoh in town.

In an Op-Ed article Friday in The Times, Dalibor Rohac, a policy analyst at the Center for Global Liberty and Prosperity at the Cato Institute in Washington, laid out the case against Morsi. In essence, it boils down to this:

In short, Egyptians increasingly feel that Hosni Mubarak's authoritarian government has never gone away but was simply replaced by another oppressive regime and kept in check only by a powerful military.

In other words, the Arab Spring has sprung, but it feels like the same old climate. So the heat is on. (Sorry, it's hot here in Southern California; these weather metaphors seem clever when you're sweating.)

Anyway, the writing is on the wall (see what I mean about cliches?) for Morsi. Egypt's military has a nasty habit of taking things into its own hands when it doesn't like the direction the country is headed (see Nassar, Gamal, and Sadat, Anwar).

Given that Morsi and his ruling party are affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, a group many Americans are suspicious about, should we be rooting for the Egyptian military to step in? After all, the military backed Mubarak, and so did the United States, and the end result was a fairly reliable U.S. ally in the Arab world for about four decades. So what would be so bad about a return to the (kind of) good-old days?

Oh sure, there's that pesky democracy thing. After all, Morsi won election a year ago in voting that was far more on the up-and-up than balloting during Mubarak's reign. Though Americans tend to be less sanguine about democracy when it brings to power rulers or parties who don't share our interests (see Chavez, Hugo).

But realistically, Morsi's days appear numbered (at two, in fact, if the military is to be believed). But that doesn't mean the instability will magically disappear if the military men make good on their threat.

The Muslim Brotherhood and Morsi may have proved inept at running Egypt, but there's little evidence that the military could do much better.

So the forecast for Egypt is much like Southern California's: hot, and getting hotter.