

Go east young man

Written by Ahmed Tharwat
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Just a whisper after his first 100 days in office, President Obama has decided to visit the biggest and most important Arab Muslim country, Egypt. On June 4th, the American president will deliver a speech from Cairo to the so-called Muslim World. (Every time you hear “the Muslim world,” you should seek shelter.)

“Go east young man” breaks away from the most sacred American political tradition in years. It is more customary for newly-elected politicians to visit Israel once they get to their office; even the first Muslim elected into Congress, Brother Keith Ellison couldn’t break that political chain.

Usually American presidents visit the Arab/Muslim world only when they are leaving office or in trouble--from Nixon’s visit to Egypt in his final days of the Watergate crisis, to Clinton’s visit to the Middle East as he was leaving his stained office, to recent President Bush’s secret visit to Iraq in his last days and President Carter waiting until leaving office to visit.

But Obama, on the 4th of June, will visit Egypt just shortly after taking office sending a message to the Arab/Muslim world after sending another message to the Non-Arab Muslims from Turkey during the G20 meeting. On his visit to Egypt, Obama need not repeat the bowing business that was comically performed before the Saudi king in Europe. The Egyptians know better.

According to Wikipedia, “*Bowing to other human beings is frowned upon in Muslim cultures as all human beings are considered equal and bowing is only supposed to be done to God in Islam*”; however, back to Wikipedia,

“*It is most prominent in Asian cultures but it is also typical of nobility and aristocracy in many countries and distinctively in Europe*”.

Egyptians are very peaceful and simple people; however, they are great experts on social hypocrisies, some learned during the Ottoman era in Egypt, where everyone is “Basha” (Pasha), “Bey”, Raiis (President), and Istaz (Mr.), as their ways of sniffing their meaning and status out of these hyper social labels, and are sensitive to foreigner visitors who tinker with their social hypocrisy codes.

The French leader Napoleon tried during his invasion of Egypt in 1798; he declared his admiration of Islam, and some went as far as claiming that the French general converted to Islam and called himself Al Haj Bonaparte. He was a frequent visitor to the Al Azhar Mosque,

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and dressed in the traditional Islamic clothes; however, he drew the line and asked to be spared the circumcision business.

But this didn't fool the Egyptians and Napoleon had to escape from Egypt frantically undercover of a woman dress. Before drafting his message to the so called Arab/Muslims world, Obama needs to understand that the Arab/Muslim world has no reverence for political speeches or gestures. They are barraged with them daily from their own corrupt leaders; political speeches are just that, "Kalam fudi," or hallow words.

On June 4th, even if Obama declared (as some conservative Americans may already fear), he is a "closet Muslim" under the name Hussein, this wouldn't change how the Arab/Muslims feel about America.

Before the Arab/Muslims would change, America needs to change their behavior in the Muslim world. Stopping dropping bombs on its citizens would be a good

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