

RELEASE IN FULL

From: Sullivan, Jacob J <SullivanJJ@state.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 6:31 PM
To: H
Subject: Fw: Egypt denies Mursi letter sent to Israel (Reuters)

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From: OpsNewsTicker@state.gov [mailto:OpsNewsTicker@state.gov]
Sent: Tuesday, July 31, 2012 06:27 PM
To: NEWS-Mahogany
Subject: Egypt denies Mursi letter sent to Israel (Reuters)

JERUSALEM/CAIRO, July 31 (Reuters) - Israel said on Tuesday it had received a letter from Egypt's President Mohamed Mursi indicating he wanted to work for peace in the Middle East, but Mursi's office later denied sending it.

An Israeli official, who asked to remain anonymous, said the denial was to be expected, due to the sensitivity of the issue.

Israeli President Shimon Peres's office said earlier on Tuesday he had received a letter from the Muslim Brotherhood's Mursi, in the first such missive to Israel since Mursi took office at the end of last month.

The letter, distributed by Peres's office, said: "I am looking forward to exerting our best efforts to get the Middle East peace process back to its right track in order to achieve security and stability for all peoples of the region, including (the) Israeli people."

Hours later, Mursi's spokesman branded the letter a fake.

"The letter that the media reported to have been sent from President Mursi to Israel was fake. President Mursi has not sent anything to Israel," spokesman Yasser Ali told Reuters.

An official from Peres's office said the letter was authentic.

"It was received by the Egyptian ambassador and handed over (to Peres's office). The denial was to be expected, given the letter's high publicity in Israeli and Egyptian media," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

Peres's office had distributed a copy of the letter to media, as well as a copy of an Egyptian embassy message sent along with it. The official spoke on condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the issue.

The Egyptian embassy in Israel could not be reached for comment.

A second Israeli official who spoke on condition of anonymity, described Mursi's letter as being one that gave "a general message with a positive spirit, but did not indicate any new direction" in bilateral relations.

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