

WASHINGTON – Egypt's President Mohamed Morsi's decree granting himself absolute power over his country's judiciary is further grounds for the immediate suspension of U.S. aid, Rep. Vern Buchanan said today.

Morsi's power grab has triggered violent protests reminiscent of last year's uprisings against Hosni Mubarak.

"The actions taken by President Morsi are unacceptable and more in line with those of the dictator he replaced," said Buchanan. "While I recognize the efforts taken by Morsi to broker a cease fire between Israel and Hamas, it is time for him to bring his own country together, not pull it apart at the seams."

NBC News reported that *"Morsi, who became the country's first democratically-elected president on June 30, issued a decree of near-total executive power to elevate himself to Pharaoh-like status."*

Last week, Congressman Buchanan called on Secretary of State Hillary Clinton to suspend U.S. aid to Egypt saying *"American taxpayer dollars should not be used to aid and abet any nation that stands with terrorists."* Morsi has openly sided with the terrorist group Hamas in its current conflict with Israel.

"Sending billions of hard earned American dollars to a country that supports Hamas is immoral," said Buchanan. "This year alone, Hamas has orchestrated the firing of over 1,000 rockets and missiles into southern Israel. Yet Egypt openly allies itself with this terrorist group and publicly condemns Israel's right to defend itself. It's time to prove through our actions not our words that Israel has our unwavering support."

Since 1979, Egypt has been the second largest recipient of U.S. foreign assistance, receiving an average of \$2 billion annually. And just last year, following the uprisings that forced out President Mubarak, the White House agreed to provide Egypt with \$1 billion in debt relief in the hope of advancing a democratic transition.

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