

# Real solutions are not being exercised to combat terrorism

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Iraqi civilians caught up in the war © Ahmad Al-Rubaye/Getty Images

Barack Obama, as a new President of the United States, came holding the torch of changed discourse when he gave his speech in one of the Islamic world's most weighted countries, Egypt.

Obama touted optimism and dialogue, calling to “forget the past” and to move forward.

Despite U.S. combat forces' withdrawal from Iraq and other peace initiatives, such as the recent U.S.-supported peace talks between the Palestinians and Israel, terrorism has been rife and baffling world governments and civilians for the past two years of the Obama administration.

## **Repetitive scenes**

From explosives tucked inside parcels shipped from Yemen bound to the United States, to the latest cold murder of more than 50 Iraqi Christians in an al-Qaeda planned attack on a Church in central Baghdad, the same scenes repeat over and over.

The Palestinian-Israeli problem is still the same scenario, with Israel not freezing settlements leading to the recent U.S. supported peace talks fizzling down.

Yet in another repetitive series, Osama bin Laden, airs a video tape “scaring” and “maiming” the French over their attempt to fully ban niqabs and warning the West over Afghanistan.

And like any other scene from the American politics, one of the either-or American parties is gaining ground for the other's “incompetent” fix. The Tea-party is growing, despite Bush's war-mongering legacy.

## **Is there a solution?**

With Yemen increasingly becoming a terrorism breeding-ground for al-Qaeda it appears that neither

American combat forces nor supposed “pacifism” will work.

Bush waged wars to install democracies by toppling governments, while Obama called for diplomacy, but both approaches do not spring from real solutions to combat at least some of the pending factors that keep terrorists undeterred.

Even with Obama’s rather soft-power approach, terrorists still have reasons to continue with their war against the West.

### **Double standards**

The entrenched double standards of the U.S. foreign policy regarding the Israeli-Palestinian problem keeps pouring fuel on fire and continues to cement the sense of victimization in the Muslim world. Not that politics in that part of the world can be strictly be seen from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict point of view, but this conflict is seen as the ultimate Western intervention in the region. And it is one important factor that keeps exacerbating anti-U.S. sentiments at least in the Arab World. Until now the U.S. has not used its ‘furious fist’ that it uses against others, to freeze settlements and to finally create a Palestinian state.

According to an Israeli newspaper, Kol Hair, the Jewish state is planning to build 3,000 house units next year, including in Arab areas.

The need to create credibility and make an alliance with moderate forces that aim for real reformist change in the Islamic world is a strategy that should have been followed and with great vigilance.

Political games will breed more alliances based on mere interests without adding any meaningful values, resulting in a contradiction of a win-win objectives while trying to create a real democracy.

### **Credibility**

U.S credibility has suffered on a number of counts:

Bush’s administration created the alleged connection between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda right after 9/11, allowing for the excuse to topple Saddam Hussein. These repercussions saw the U.S allied with a sectarian-prone alliance to form a new Iraqi government that furthered the sectarian divides in Iraqi politics.

Obama has not seriously recognised that political parties based on religious sects and ethnicities work as the anti-thesis of modernity, retarding any true democracy from flourishing in any country.

The uncalculated war on Iraq has allowed Iran to gain far more clout in the region. Iran not only has Hezbollah but now it has Iraq as a maneuvering ground to aid Shiite militias to maim targets according to its wishes.

### **A world of changing alliances**

In the beginning the U.S. aided Osama bin Laden and Taliban get rid of the former Soviet Union from Afghanistan but these alliances have changed – Osama and the U.S. are now enemies. Now recent reports show that Iran, who is against the Taliban, will use al-Qaeda as a card to be played.

After the 2003 war in Afghanistan, many al-Qaeda group leaders took refuge in Iran after being driven out by the United States. Despite their initial suppression in Iran, as an Associated Press article recently revealed, Iran has given them more freedom to operate in the Islamic republic. CIA reports have supported this, speculating that Iran is easing its grip on al-Qaeda members within the Islamic republic.

Al-Qaeda, a hardcore Sunni-branch of extremists, has allied with a Shiite Iranian government proving yet another lesson that political alliances are always changing in the region.

Democratic values are important and can tone the severity of dangerous alliances and lessen the danger for those wishing to further democracy.

To combat terrorism, democracy should be made the number one criteria, not necessarily through force but through meaningful additions.

### **The need to create critical thinking and cash**

It is no surprise that terrorism comes from countries that have a population uncared for. It is a rare incident to hear of a UAE or Qatari national as a terrorist – as opposed to Egyptian, Palestinian, Syrians, Iraqis, Yemeni or Saudi Arabian. The UAE and Qatar have stayed away from the “traditional” Palestinian-Israeli conflict to focus on building their countries but do Syria, Lebanon, Egypt and the Palestinians have the same luxury when their countries are bordering Israel?

It is time for these countries to shift the focus of “traditional” problems away from feeling victimized to reality of combating terrorism. Maybe their public needs to mull over some difficult decisions – for example, whether the recent arrest of a young man by Hamas for being an apostate and a critic of Islam is acceptable or not? It is time for stability in the region and for the West to learn from its lessons.

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