



Obama's Interview with Al Arabiya

On the morning of Tuesday, January 27, President Barack Obama gave an interview with Al Arabiya, an Arab news network based out of Dubai, in an attempt to quell Arab distrust and hate of America. He also sent former Senator George Mitchell to the Middle East as an envoy to help broker peace between Israel and the Palestinians.



On the surface, it seems the right thing to do: former President George W. Bush was highly unpopular in the Arab world, so fences need mending; according to Al Arabiya, "75 percent of Egyptians think Obama's top priority should be mediating peace between Palestinians and ... Israel"; and the major European nations want America's president to be humble yet provide world leadership. With predictions that a gesture of reconciliation and friendship to the Arab world would do more to stifle al-Qaeda's recruiting than any other possible measure, how could Obama say "no"?

But it's not that simple.

Bringing a message of good will to the Middle East, while laudable in principle and seemingly beneficial no matter what the outcome, will likely backfire and lead to renewed bad blood in the Arab world toward the United States, for the simple reason that the hand of friendship will undoubtedly lead to involvement.

In addition, the United States is viewed throughout the Arab world as Israel's lackey (and vice versa), and interceding in the conflict will mean choosing a side. And any choice that amounts to less than fully supporting the Palestinian cause will be seen as pro-Israel bias. Hamas spokesman Fawzi Barhum has already said, "President Obama must adopt positions backing the just Palestinian cause, putting an end to Zionist crimes and recognizing the right of the Palestinian people to defend itself."

Al Arabiya, in a previous article about Obama's inauguration, quoted "Egypt's government-owned daily *al-Ahram*" about American foreign policy in that region: "We know the kind of pressure the Jewish lobby puts on the presidents in the United States and the degree of influence this minority exercises daily in departments and organs of political decision-making."

A perusal of Al Arabiya's coverage of Israel's recent foray into Gaza to stop incessant rocket attacks by Hamas militants revealed that the prevailing Arab terminology for the attack was the "Gaza massacre." The Iranian government's main newspaper *Kayhan*, called Obama "a big fan of Zionists."



Written by [Kurt Williamsen](#) on January 27, 2009

It is likely that as far as the Arab world is concerned, Obama has already chosen a side because he publicly said, “For years Hamas has launched thousands of rockets at innocent Israeli citizens. No democracy can tolerate such danger to its people.” (The Palestinians, on the other hand, argue that if they don’t blow things up, they will be ignored by all parties.) Plus Obama intends to redeploy U.S. troops from Islamic Iraq to Islamic Afghanistan, which will surely be used by Muslim extremists to vilify America.

So what should be done?

Apply the policy of the Founding Fathers — avoiding foreign entanglements, minding our own business in foreign affairs — to the Middle East as well as to the rest of the world. Such a policy would include ending foreign aid to Israel (approximately \$3 billion per year) as well as to the Palestinian Authority (hundreds of millions of dollars per year). It makes no sense to fund both sides in a conflict.



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