

Introduction:

North Africa, Central Africa, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East encompasses an incredibly large area. America's interests across this area include, but are not limited to: counter-terrorism, financial markets, the survival of Israel and humanitarian issues. Progress in the region has been mixed and the United States will have to focus more on this region in the future to achieve its goals. The methods used in each area to pursue America's interests are tailored to that specific region; however, in general the United States will increase its use of soft power and pursue policies which enhance stability while gradually establishing institutions that may someday lead to liberal democracy.

North Africa:

The Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (TSCTI), a \$100 million a year state department/DoD project, has significantly increased the counter-terrorism capabilities of North African states and helped to crack down on numerous terrorist organizations. However, these terrorist groups receive funding and training from Al Qaeda which enables them to continue launching attacks. This link must be broken if we hope to end Islamic extremist terrorism in North Africa. A continuation and strengthening of the TSCTI will increase America's cooperation with North African states and support stability by reducing the number of terrorist incidents. The United States should also increase international cooperation by working with European allies who also have interests in the region. The U.S. should support educational programs in the region to combat salafi-jihadi ideology in the long term and empower future generations in the region.

Egypt and Jordan:

The U.S. maintains good relations with Egypt and Jordan. The U.S. provides an average of \$2 billion annually to Egypt. This aid allows the Egyptian government to remain strong and in turn the Egyptian government groups sympathetic to Islamic extremism. The United States should encourage the gradual implementation of democratic institutions in Egypt and continue its aid program while the Egyptian government continues its counter-terrorism effort. The current regime is likely to stay in power for the foreseeable future, but the U.S. should remain neutral on upcoming elections because America wants to be seen as supporting Egypt and not as just supporting a particular party.

Jordan is similar to Egypt in that the U.S. has a strong relationship with their authoritarian government. The Jordanian government and the U.S. have shared counter-terrorism interests. The U.S. gives aid to Jordan that allows the government to maintain stability; something that is in U.S. interests particularly due to Jordan's central position in the Middle East and its border with Iraq. Like Egypt, American goals for Jordan are being achieved and the challenge is maintaining this stability in the future – something that can be achieved by continuing aid to Jordan and strengthening the current relationship. Overall, the U.S. has made progress with these two countries and the principal future challenge is maintaining a strengthening these relationships in accordance with concurrent interests.

Syria and Lebanon:

The relationship between Syria and Lebanon is of serious concern to the United States. Syria's interference in Lebanon is a destabilizing factor in the region and the U.S.

encourages the two nations to cooperate through traditional diplomatic means. Additionally, Syria's lack of control over its own border is a problem for the United States because it allows Islamic extremists free transit to and from Iraq. The United States would like to strengthen its relationship with Syria in order to: 1) help Syria secure their border 2) prevent Syria from succumbing to Iranian influence and 3) encourage normal diplomatic relations between Syria and Lebanon.

The situation in Lebanon remains fragile: Israel recently invaded Lebanon, Hizbollah is increasing its influence in Lebanon, Syria still has strong ties to portions of Lebanon and the Lebanese government is struggling to maintain its fragile control. America remains committed to the Lebanese people and must use its diplomatic power to achieve peace in the region. With so many groups competing for influence in Lebanon, the United States must use foreign aid incentives and strengthen its diplomatic ties to Syria, Iran, Lebanon and Israel to achieve stability in the region.

Darfur and Somalia

The overarching problem in Sudan and the Horn of Africa is security. Since 1993, the Darfur Region of Sudan has been experiencing an escalating conflict between the Arab Muslim and the Black Muslim populations. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, the United States Government has labeled this conflict as genocide. Thus far, the U.S. has aided several NGOs as well as mobilized support and awareness within the International Community. The U.S. has also provided logistical support to the African Union which is currently the only IGO with a physical presence in Darfur. However, little progress has been made in the area and there are still several challenges that the U.S. must address. Though some help has been given to the AU, the U.S. must develop effective strategies of assistance to the AU. This assistance could be financial, logistical, and/or operational. However, due to commitments elsewhere the United States' resources are limited. Currently the U.S. has no policy on what actions must be taken to address genocide. It is in the interest of the U.S. to exert moral leadership in the world which compels the U.S. to minimize the effects of genocide. Therefore the U.S. must establish a systematic approach to genocide.

It is a strategy of the U.S. to establish relations with countries in order to combat terrorism. As a failed state, Somalia has the potential to become a terrorist safe-haven. The U.S. has established relations with Djibouti and Ethiopia in order to help bring stability in the region. These relations have encouraged countries in this region to unite against terrorism. The challenge in Somalia will be to create an infrastructure to promote stability and discourage terrorist activity in the area.

Israeli and Palestine:

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to contribute to instability in the greater Middle East region. Although this conflict doesn't create other tensions and violence in the region, it helps to perpetuate instability as a mobilizing ideological force within the Middle East region. Recognizing the importance of America's alliance with Israel, the United States must earn the trust of both sides in order to facilitate negotiations between Israel and Palestine. The United States should consider the ways in which the Arab League and the Quarter (U.S, EU, UN and Russia) could contribute to the peace process. Resolution of this conflict will greatly increase stability and increase America's credibility in the region.