THE AFTERMATH OF SADDAM: ARAB APPREHENSIVENESS ABOUT THE UNITED STATES

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**The Aftermath of Saddam: Arab Apprehensiveness about the United States**
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**Abstract**
This study examines the nature and evolution of anti-American sentiment in the Arab world, especially in light of the September 11 attacks and the US-led war on Iraq. Anti-Americanism is broken down into two dimensions: growing resentment of US foreign policy and extreme manifestation of hatred for the United States in the form of terrorist reprisal against American interests. The discussion shows that, unless the US opts for a shift in its Middle Eastern policy, endorsement for political Islam and therefore the propensity of violent retaliation against US targets will increase.

**Introduction**
The US-led war on Iraq has generated an intense wave of anti-American sentiments across the globe. International opposition to the invasion has varied between two poles: negative attitudes and street protests on one hand, and active hostility in the form of terrorist attacks on US interests on the other[[1]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn1%22%20%5Co%20%22).  In fact, the diplomatic fallout over the war has produced standard-bearers of potent anti-Americanism. Despite close historical cooperation between the US and some European countries, serious tensions have marred US relations with standard allies such as France and Germany over the war. Another manifestation of anti-American feelings occurred when Millions took the streets to protest US war on Iraq, they were especially colossal and unprecedented in Britain, Italy, Spain and Australia, the countries whose governments support US policy making this support massively unpopular with their own populations. Even the pope spoke against the war “Violence and arms can never resolve the problems of man”[[2]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn2%22%20%5Co%20%22).

US unilateralism has apparently antagonized its European allies who are demanding a multi polar world. Resentment grew also because the US was perceived to be exerting its power in an unfair, biased, and arbitrary manner in pursuing its national interests. Norbert Walter points out thatَ hatred results from a felt mismatch between US claims of pursuing universal human rights on the one hand, and the promotion of US economic and security interests i.e. Middle East Oil supplies[[3]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn3%22%20%5Co%20%22).

With the end of the invasion, and while the political debate regarding the future of Iraq rages, Arab anti-American sentiment continues to worry US policy-makers. For, in the Arab world public discontent with US policy and action in Iraq retains a more alarming and powerful message: anti-Americanism blends with significant endorsement for the tenets of political Islam producing a toxic mix. This reality has been confirmed by the fact that the perpetrators involved in anti-American violence during the last decade were mostly Arabs.
This study examines the nature and evolution of anti-American sentiment in the Arab world, especially in light of the September 11 attacks and the US-led war on Iraq. Anti-Americanism is broken down into two dimensions: growing resentment of US foreign policy and extreme manifestation of hatred for the United States in the form of terrorist reprisal against American interests.

**I-Anti-Americanism in the Middle East: A Historical Legacy**
Arab-US relations have been characterized by a history of mutual antagonism: from the early Arab conquests through the crusades, into the rise of the Ottoman Empire and through the fall of Constantinople. Specifically, several scholars attribute the roots of Arab-Islamic disaffection with the West to the last years of the Eighteenth century when Napoleon’s armies invaded Egypt and faced Muslims with a spectacular display of force, the extent of their cultural, scientific, and military incompatibility with the West[[4]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn4%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Arab alienation was accelerated by the decline of the Ottoman Empire, the surge of European imperialism after the establishment of the mandate system, the failed experiments of liberalism and the consolidation of the modern state system after the First World War. Many argue that the imperative of modernization itself have caused a resurgence of Islam, especially in the form of religious fundamentalism. Khashan[[5]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn5%22%20%5Co%20%22) contends that modernization has failed and religious issues have become important in reaction to this failure. Insufficient modernization efforts and the continued dependence of Arab states on the West have added to the grievances of religious movements. ّIslamic fundamentalism is the product of cultural and intellectual stagnation, Western colonialism and the failure of secular nationalist mode of government. Faksh blames fundamentalism on the failure of secular national ideologies and movements advocating secular nationalism that rallied millions across the Arab World[[6]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn6%22%20%5Co%20%22). Old ideologies have failed to deliver their promises of national strength, social and economic development and political freedom, i.e. they failed to handle effectively the conflict with Israel, to achieve economic self-sufficiency, to stem the widening gap between rich and poor, to halt deeply entrenched corruption and nepotism, and to resist Western cultural and political hegemony.َ He adds: ّThe first Gulf War Represents a shocking testimony to Arab impotence and to their paralyzing dependence on the West to solve their problems after fifty years of independence[[7]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn7%22%20%5Co%20%22).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            Furthermore, modernization has contributed to a breakdown in community values, lifestyles and traditions, causing widespread feelings of dislocation, alienation and disorientation. The failure to secure independence coupled with political corruption and chronic economic stagnation, paved the way for the appearance of Islamist movements struggling against the West.
With the creation of Israel and the end of European colonialism, the people of the Middle East became that much more disillusioned with the West and, subsequently, with the leader of the West, the United States. However, according to Makdessi Arab hostility to the US does not result from old and long term resentment toward American values, but stems from a recent disaffection with America’s foreign policy in
the region, especially its support for Israel. Anti-Americanism is not rooted in Arab culture or Islam.[[8]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn8%22%20%5Co%20%22)َ  In fact, as early as 1953, Stephen Penrose, the president of the American University of Beirut observed that “the Arabs perceive with bitterness America’s support for Israel” a support emanating from domestic and electoral policy considerations for the Jewish lobby in the USَ. He advised his country to adopt an impartial policy in the Middle East, to show respect for democratic values and real understanding of Arab mentality[[9]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn9%22%20%5Co%20%22).  Historical setbacks, such as the military defeat of 1967 have led to the resurfacing of Islamist movements, who are at least in their rhetorical stances, totally opposed to the West, and in particular to the United States. Thus, they rejected US-brokered Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty of 1979 and subsequent efforts for Arab-Israeli peace, which they regarded as evidence of new forms of Western encroachment on sacred Arab territory.[[10]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn10%22%20%5Co%20%22)

**II-Militant Islam and the United States**
The current wave of antagonism toward the United States stems from the Iranian revolution which associates, in the minds of Americans, with fundamentalism conjuring up images of mobs shouting ُdeath to America, embassies in flames, assassins and hijackers threatening innocent lives, hands chopped off, and women oppressed[[11]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn11%22%20%5Co%20%22).  The West viewed the Iranian regime as fanatic and aggressive characterized by excessive religious zeal, violence, radicalism and antagonism toward the United States. Israel and the United States have long served as these groups’ primary targets. The success of Iranian-sponsored suicide bombings throughout the 1980s and 1990s in linking religious zeal to political objectives, sparked martyr operations, which have been on the rise since the 1990s. It has been transformed from an exemplary act of sacrifice into an inspirational model for revolution and action. This helped create an atmosphere that is conducive to suicide bombings. During the 1980s, a series of suicide bombings were staged against the U.S. Embassy in Beirut and U.S. and French military compounds. These attacks led to the withdrawal of the Multinational force, which had been operating in Beirut under a mandate from the UN Security Council in the aftermath of Israel’s 1982 invasion of Lebanon. The image of US citizens held hostage between 1984 and 1990 was sealed into the American mind. Faction of the Lebanese resistance carried out suicide attacks against Israeli forces in Lebanon. These attacks created the perception that these groups including Hizbullah, were the most compelling factor in Israel’s withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May of 2000. Hizbullah’s religious beliefs inspired other Islamist groups in Palestine, namely Hamas and Islamic Jihad.[[12]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn12%22%20%5Co%20%22)

Outside the Lebanese realm, the 1991 Gulf War and US military presence in the region engendered a wave of anti-American terrorism inside and outside the United States. The litany of Islamic militant attacks against the U.S. included the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the Khobar Towers in 1996, U.S. embassies in Dar al-Salam and Nairobi in 1998, and the U.S.A. Cole in Aden in 2000. On September 11, 2001, suicidal Arab Muslim militants seized four commercial carriers and crashed into the World Trade Center and Pentagon- symbols of American economic and military might. Thousands of civilians were killed in the attacks, making it the largest loss of civilian life in a single terrorist attack anywhere in the world. While many denounced the terrorist attacks, calling them a perversion of Islam, Osama bin Laden, the alleged instigator, and a chorus of voices in the West portrayed the suicide bombings and US retaliation as a clash of civilizations. The issue of Islam’s role in generating conflict has become especially controversial since Samuel Huntington[[13]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn13%22%20%5Co%20%22) asserted that Islam has bloody borders and predicted that the dynamics of civilization conflict in the post cold war era would reinforce and intensify this phenomenon. His analysis is part of a larger notion that conflicts are defined by a clash of civilizations. Huntington holds that conflicts involving Islamic civilization will be particularly common and violent and that Islamic civilization will be the greatest threat to Western civilization.
While many aspects of Huntington theory are controversial, his arguments concerning Islam have found acceptance among intellectuals and policymakers. And that may, as some maintain, make Huntington’s analysis self-fulfilling. They suggested that the conflict between the US and Muslim fanatics is more rooted in the nature of Islam than its defenders suggested[[14]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn14%22%20%5Co%20%22).  Novelist Salman Rushdie wrote an opinion pieceَ Yes this is about Islam, in which he spoke of the need for a depoliticized Islam assailing the religion and asserting that a neo-fundamentalist Islam was a contradiction of terms[[15]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn15%22%20%5Co%20%22).
Within the context of these reactions therefore, Islam is portrayed as a primary security concern and Muslims frequently referred to as extremists, fanatics, terrorists, or fundamentalists, associating Islam as a religion with violence.

**III-Arab Alienation and US Foreign Policy
in the Aftermath of September 11**
Many academics, observers and policymakers attributed the September 11 attacks to perceived anti-Americanism across the Arab world, which stems from Washington’s foreign policy. Chomsky argued that terrorism needed to be understood as a response to and product of United States foreign policy[[16]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn16%22%20%5Co%20%22).  Tessler readily acknowledges, ّThis sentiment, wherever present in the Arab world, is usually based on U.S. foreign policy toward Israel, toward Iraq, and above all perpetuation of the status quo[[17]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn17%22%20%5Co%20%22). َ In an opinion poll, Lebanese Muslims expressed an unfavorable opinion of the United States, with the vast majority of respondents believing that U.S. military action in Afghanistan was morally unjustified. Most of the people questioned said they thought the United States was aggressive and biased against Islamic values. Specifically, they cited bias against the Palestinians. The survey also found that respondents viewed American culture as a corrupting influence on their society[[18]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn18%22%20%5Co%20%22).  The poll which included nine Muslim countries, contended itself with reporting that two-thirds of those interviewed expressed unfavorable opinion of the U.S. and that the September 11 attacks had no moral justification[[19]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn19%22%20%5Co%20%22). Similarly, a poll by Zogbi International limited itself to reporting that 86 percent of Lebanese it interviewed have negative impressions of U.S. policy toward Arab nations.[[20]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn20%22%20%5Co%20%22)
US role in the Arab-Israeli conflict is often cited as the leading issue that continues to breed anger among Arabs in the Middle East. American Historian Tony Judt sustains this reality:َ
In my reading of European and Near Eastern sentiment today, the Israel-Palestine conflict and America’s association with Israel are the greatest single source of anti-American sentiment, crossing political, ideological and national boundaries[[21]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn21%22%20%5Co%20%22).َ Arabs know about America's interest in a secure and peaceful Israel.

That interest derives from many factors: historical ties dating back to America's early support for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, shared Judeo\_Christian religious sensibilities, and common democratic values. Israel enjoys the strong and emotional support of a large segment of the American population. This support is more broadly based than the Jewish community, although this community's ties with the Jewish state are especially close. Israel's long\_term security requires a stable peace with its Arab neighbors. The Arabs look with disaffection the continued American military and technological support that helps assure conventional Israeli security.
The Oslo Accords enabled Jordan to sign a peace treaty with Israel, led to negotiations between Israel and Syria, and emboldened Arab states in the Gulf and North Africa to forge closer ties with Israel. The deadlock in the peace process in the past year has halted further normalization of relations between Israel and the Arab world and has intensified opposition to normalization by the general Arab public and its intellectual elites, putting strains even on the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan. There is no dearth of scholars who attempt to explain the causes of political terrorism to legitimate grievances, related to US policy, that contribute to Arab hatred. Shibley Telhami, professor of Peace and Development at the University of Maryland explains:َ There is legitimate anger and genuine despair in the Middle East, which provides fertile ground for terrorists to exploit, unless we address the root of this anger and despair, new terrorists exploiting public hopelessness could replace the ones we destroy.َ[[22]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn22%22%20%5Co%20%22)
Abdelkarim maintained that Muslim and Arab resentment grows exponentially when they look toward America’s foreign policy stands that are perceived as anti-Muslim and anti-Arab namely US military support for Israel and failure to acknowledge Palestinian and Iraqi people sufferings[[23]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn23%22%20%5Co%20%22).

A chorus of voices in the Arab world called on the US to redirect its foreign policy in the area. Sheikh Farid Elias El-Khazen remarked that ّUS unconditional support to Israel, the on-going conflict between US and Iraq, and US stationing its troops in the Gulf, all of this has not only fostered a breeding ground for Arab disaffection with the US but provided a cause for fighting the US[[24]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn24%22%20%5Co%20%22).

This view is shared by a member in the Lebanese parliament who saw the attacks as ّthe end product of a cumulative process of humiliating Arabs and preferential treatment for Israel[[25]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn25%22%20%5Co%20%22).

 Similarly, the director of the Beirut based Institute for Palestine Studies, Mahmood Souaid argues that ّUS support for oppressive Arab regimes who lack democratic outlets promote the surge of Islamic extremism such as Osama bin Laden[[26]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn26%22%20%5Co%20%22).

َSayed advised the US administration to adjust its policy in the area in order to appease popular resentment[[27]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn27%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Acknowledging Arab negative perceptions of his country, US State Secretary Colin Powell announced an initiative aiming at improving the US poor image in Arab states by helping them build democracy and increase economic opportunities. However, Powell announced no change in fundamental policies cited by many Arabs as underlying their resentment such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, US pressure on Iraq, and other countries said to support terrorism[[28]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn28%22%20%5Co%20%22)

**VI-The Occupation of Iraq:**
**A Catalyst of Militant Islam?**
Long before the beginning of America’s recent military campaign to liberate Iraq, replete with ّshock and aweَ, there were serious concerns that this war will radicalize Muslims and fuel anti-American sentiments already ignited in the Middle East. Many thought that Saddam will paint any attack on Iraq as a conflict pitting Islam against the West. Earlier this year, former American security Advisor, Brent Scowcroft argued that Saddam Hussein is seen as a brutal dictator oppressing his own people but not an immediate threat to the US or its neighbors. A nuclear-armed Iraq could menace its neighbors and the stability of world oil supplies but this could be met initially through resuming UN role and a decision to go to war should have the backing of a multinational force. There is a widespread sentiment that United Nation Security Council ought to be the principle arbiter of international security but an invasion without UN backing could transform Hussein into an Islamic martyr, Scowcroft warned. It is equally likely that after an interval of months or a year, Hussein overthrow would set off an explosion of radicalism and terrorism that would resound for decades to come[[29]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn29%22%20%5Co%20%22).
Complicating matters the fact that justification for the assault on Iraq is not as clear as it was in 1991. At that time, the rationalization was to liberate Kuwait, which had been ravaged by Saddam’s troops. At present, the stated aim was to destroy weapons of mass destruction but no evidence of them was ever found. As such, many in the Arab world are suspicious about Washington real motives. As soon as the US troops entered Baghdad, Kent deplored the US plan to impose an Interim authority under the ultimate command of general Tommy Franks, led by a retired general Jay Garner who believes the US can project its power into the region by way of the Israeli state and military.َ He adds To many Arabs, this project smacks of arrogance and hegemony.َ By the same token, Mustapha Karkuti, an elected council member of Britain’s Royal Institute of International Affairs, considers thatَ this idea will catalyze reprisals against the Americansَ people in the region won’t take this lying down. Certainly they will resist, they willl defend, and this US policy will end with tragedy throughout the Middle East.[[30]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn30%22%20%5Co%20%22)
In an opinion poll, Lebanese respondents considered that the real reasons behind the war on Iraq is to attempt to control oil fields (64%)  and that the US will subsequently try to impose a peace deal in favor of Israel[[31]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn31%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Another poll by Information International found out that 94% of those interviewed disapprove of the US-led war on Iraq, believe that the war’s final outcome will affect negatively the Iraqi people. The overwhelming majority endorsed retaliation attacks against US troops to force their retreat from Iraqi territories[[32]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn32%22%20%5Co%20%22).

US occupation of Iraq and plans to instigate peace in the region appear to be dangerous. Islamists are calling for suicide attacks, and radicals of every stripe are competing to hijack the anger engendered by this war. In Beirut, Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fad Allah told Newsweek
This war has united the Islamic world from border to border against the United States if more massacres take place and if more occupation is seen, I fear that we will witness a wave of terrorism that no one will be able to control[[33]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn33%22%20%5Co%20%22).
Even Egyptian president Husni Mubarak has warned of darker days to comeَ this war will have horrible consequences instead of having one Bin Laden; we will have hundred Bin Laden.
The US needs to learn from the past. From Beirut in 1983 to the events of September 11 and their aftermath, the images of American casualties serve as a reminder for what the US is about to undertake. Sayyid Hassan Nassrullah, the general secretary of Hizbullah in
Lebanon went further, days after the US-led coalition ousted Sadam’s regime from Iraq, to assert:َ US intervention in Iraq will encourage Islamists to conduct retaliation attacks against US intereststhe continuation of this policy will turn all Muslims and Arabs to enemies of the US[[34]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn34%22%20%5Co%20%22).

**Conclusion and Implications**
Western fear of militant Islam is not new. Albert Hourani noticed the absence of militant tendencies in Islam:
Two strands of thought ... moved further apart from each other: ... those who stood fast on the Islamic bases of society, and ... moved closer to a kind of Muslim fundamentalism ... [and] those who continued to accept Islam as a body of principles or ... of sentiments, but held that life in society should be regulated by secular norms, of individual welfare or collective strength.... For most of ... this generation, the secular principle was [Ottoman, Egyptian, or Arab] nationalism[[35]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn35%22%20%5Co%20%22).
However, he observed “The rage of Arabs and other Muslims continued to grow throughout the rest of the twentieth century, not because of any teachings of Islam as such but as a result of the forced domination of Muslims by Western nations, which increased with one nakba [defeat] after another.”
In Hourani’s phrase, the kind of Muslim fundamentalismَ that developed after 1920 was represented by Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood and the formative years of two guiding spirits of what would become the “Islamic resurgence: Sayyid Qutb and Mawlana Mawdudi”, both of whom were to advocate external jihad and martyrdom, though few outside the Muslim world took them literally at the time.
Few decades after Hourani’s assertion, most Arabs and Muslims continue to see radical Islam as a consequence of Western invasions of their territories, as well as a result of the excesses of unpopular political elites whom they installed in power against public will.
The media has bombarded us with generalizations that the Western-led U.S. is largely responsible for Arab and Muslim misfortunes. Sutter lists several reasons that account for the revival of Islam as a political force during this century, namely the permanence of deep-seated resentment at the West’s violence to Islam over the centuries and the West’s slow reaction to Christian violence against Muslims, i.e Serbian and Croatian massacres in Bosnia.[[36]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn36%22%20%5Co%20%22)
On the other hand, several writers draw our attention to the need for dialogue and a redirection in the United States foreign policy toward the Muslim world. Monshipouri deplored this reductionist vision in the United States that reduce the conflict with Arab states to its cultural component, he advised the US to craft a coherent policy approach towards the Arab/Muslim world that is sensitive to Islam if it intends to play an enduring role in the region’s peace process. Treating Muslims as enemies in a new cold war would not promote such a role[[37]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn37%22%20%5Co%20%22).

Comerford advised that ّreal dialogue with the Islamic world is the only way of removing prejudice and fears of an imaginary threat[[38]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn38%22%20%5Co%20%22).
The cycle of religiously inspired violence has punctuated the lives of Middle Easterners for more than three decades. It eventually spilled into Western Europe before hitting the U.S. with unimaginable ferocity. Bringing peace, stability and order to the Middle East is long due. If the problems of the region are not acted upon immediately, they may soon slip past the point of resolution. Since September 11 many writers have been imploring the U.S. to help resolve the region’s outstanding problems and display magnanimity towards them. Fuller (2002) warned that “it will be a disaster for the United States, and another cruel chapter in the history of the Muslim World, if the war on terrorism fails to liberalize these battered societies and instead [continues] to exacerbate those very conditions that contribute to the virulent anti-Americanism of today.َ Salman Rushdie conceded thatَ anti-US radicalism would not be undermined until a comprehensive and acceptable settlement is reached in the Middle East. However, even then anti-Americanism would not abate[[39]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn39%22%20%5Co%20%22).”
Hassan Nassrullah, the general secretary of Hizbullah in Lebanon went further, days after the US-led coalition ousted Sadam’s regime from Iraq, to assert:َ US intervention in Iraq will encourage Islamists to conduct retaliation attacks against US intereststhe continuation of this policy will turn all Muslims and Arabs to enemies of the US[[40]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_edn40%22%20%5Co%20%22).
The achievement of genuine peace between Israel and the Palestinians and the instauration of democracy in a post Saddam Hussein Iraq would go a long way in improving Arab publics’ perception of the U.S. and curtailing the surge of militant Islam’s universal dimension.

[[1]](https://www.lebarmy.gov.lb/en/content/aftermath-saddam-arab-apprehensiveness-about-united-states%22%20%5Cl%20%22_ednref1%22%20%5Co%20%22) In October 2002, a car bomb attack on the Indonesian holiday island of Bali killed more than 200 the majority of which were foreign tourists. A second bomb went off near the US consulate in Sanur, near Kuta.The Bali attacks were believed to be part of a pattern that included attacks a week before which killed a US marine in Kuwait and another attack on a French oil tanker. During March 2003, explosive attacks on American food outlets wounded several people in Lebanon and Egypt and the killing of an American nurse working as a missionary in South Lebanon. To date, Americans living in Beirut continue to receive several messages of warning from extremist Lebanese Islamic groups and some have fled the country after a terrorist network of Islamist militants was arrested and blamed for the crimes. The group confessed planning attacks against US embassy and other US interests in Lebanon.

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