New American Policy in ME

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The American administration seems to be pragmatic through evaluating and re-assessing its policies over time, and particularly at times of difficulties and obvious failures. Currently, the American foreign policy in the Middle East is facing extreme difficulties and real strong challenges. Israel, the closest American ally, was defeated in southern Lebanon; Hamas won the elections in Palestine against the American favored Fatah; the Iraqi resistance has been gaining strength and impetus; the American troops in Afghanistan are under increasing fire-power; and the American threats against Iran aren't productive. What to do, the Americans are asking.

The Americans believe that their most intricate difficulty now is in Iraq because a military defeat might be imminent. The Americans are under daily fire with increasing losses in personnel. The morale of their troops is down, the internal pressure is rising, more and more Americans are calling for the withdrawal of their troops, and the international community is openly expressing dissatisfaction with the war; and some countries such as France think that Iraq is becoming a new stronghold for terrorists. For these reasons, the American administration has been talking about a new strategy in Iraq that fits in the general American strategy in the area.

Before outlining the main features of this strategy, I should say that what the Americans are practically talking about new tactics rather than new strategy. Based upon the literature I have been reading, a new strategy is far from being there. The American administration is talking about the following steps:

1- Increasing the American troops in Iraq in an endeavor to promote a new impression of deterrence. It is thought that more troops will frighten the Iraqi resistance and put it under heavier gunfire. The Americans think that they will be able to be present at more places in Iraq at one time, a tactic that might be more effective.

2- Taking steps toward gaining the hearts of the Moslem Sunnis who have been exposed to exterminating and cleansing policies from the side of the Iraqi Shiite government and the militias. Almost all Sunni and Shiite factions are practicing mass-killings in Iraq everyday- but the Sunnis seem to be exposed to more fierce and brutal pogroms. This might incite the Sunni majority in the Arab world and put the US oriented Arab political regimes under internal pressure. Some Arab governments have been dissatisfied with the American negligence of the Sunni atrocities, and asked for new American measures that will provide for more Sunni protection.

3- Putting the Iraqi government under direct and strict supervision so as to make sure that it is conducting an even handed policy, and taking measures against all armed people including the Shiite militia.

4- Folding the Iranian influence and making sure that Iraq will not be an ally of Iran. The Americans, together with the Arab governments are worried about the increasing Iranian presence in Iraq, and sense the danger that might be imposed.

Along these major American steps, there are collateral steps on the regional level, and could be summarized in the following:

1- steps toward creating internal conflicts in some countries such as Lebanon and Palestine. Through this, the Americans will be able to weaken those who oppose their policies in the area such as Hizballa and Hamas. If internal conflicts erupt, so much of Arab resources will be eroded, and it will become easier for the US to retain its domination on the area.
2- Encouraging the Arab regimes to ignite waves of hatred against the Shiites, in an effort to avert the Shiite influence in the area, and to start a sectarian war that might last for a long time. The peoples of the area already feel the tension that has been rising between the Sunnis and the Shiites.
3- Isolating Iran from its centers of influence. They have been putting pressure on Hamas so as to accept the Western vision for solving the Arab-Israeli conflict in return of financial help for the Palestinians. And the y have been supporting the Lebanese government toward stripping Hizballah from its Iranian made military arsenal.
4- Encouraging the Arab governments to take measures against Iran so as to curb its nuclear ambitions. There is so much incitement against the Iran in the Arab street, and I believe that the Americans would like to see a new Iranian-Arab war similar to that of the early eighties.

Will the US succeed? The political developments in the area are actually turning against the wishes of the Americans. The peoples of the area are becoming more aware of the American intentions, and the resistance movements are gaining stronger grounds. As I indicated above, The Americans have been losing, and I think that they have a very slim chance to turn things around. Arabia and Iran are witnessing now an historical development that could be explained on objective factors. Objectivity is certainly is more persistent than the subjectivity of the US. that is why the Americans would be wiser if they decide to cooperate with the peoples of the area rather than dominate.