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Wave of Anti-American Protests Spread Across Middle East

By [John Glaser](#)

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A wave of protests is spreading across the Middle East, targeted at US Embassy buildings, apparently triggered by an anti-Islam film posted on the Internet and produced in America.



The unrest began in Egypt on Tuesday night when hundreds of people stormed the US Embassy and tore apart an American flag, condemning the content of the film, which portrayed the Prophet Muhammad in an insulting fashion, as blasphemy.

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Following that, hundreds of people in Libya attacked a US consulate building, shooting live rounds at the building and setting it on fire, leading to the death of the US ambassador and three other Americans.

The Obama administration reportedly believes this particular incident was [provoked by al-Qaeda militants](#) in Libya intending to mark the anniversary of 9/11 and the recent death of an al-Qaeda commander. The President [ordered military reinforcements in the country](#), including Marines, drones, and warships off the coast.

But now other anti-American protests at US diplomatic buildings [have spread](#) to Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, Iraq, Yemen, Iran, [Israel](#), Gaza, and [even Bangladesh](#). How much of this is being driven by the short film and how much is being driven by general anti-American sentiment, with the film being the mere spark, is not clear.

Protests in Egypt went on for a third day straight on Thursday, with over 200 people injured. In Yemen, protesters stormed the US Embassy, burned the American flag, set cars on fire, and were eventually beaten back by US-supported security forces using tear gas, a water cannon, and live fire reportedly shot into the air. [One Yemeni was killed](#) in the clashes.

The Middle East is still in a period of transition, with a culture of protest movements arising out of the Arab Spring. While many are certainly offended at the insulting anti-Muslim film, the video is probably just the tipping point for populations in these countries to express their grievances against domestic economic troubles, Western secularism, and an American foreign policy that continues to support dictatorship across the region, occupy and bomb several Muslim countries regularly, and assist Israel in its occupation of Palestinians.