

Nov 04, 2016 by [Mark Dillen](#)

Setting the Scene ^[1]

As President Obama embarks for Riyadh and Cairo this evening, the "scene setters" appear: the [BBC](#) headlines "what could be one of the most important speeches of his presidency"; America's own NPR features a pre-departure [interview](#) focused on the Cairo speech as a "high-profile opportunity to reshape America's image among Muslim countries."

We're all familiar how, in professional sports, athletes and coaches try to avoid rash comments before a big game. The same is often true in politics as officials try to manage expectations before a big event. This time, however, the Obama White House has set the bar high. Expect no radical changes in U.S. policy, they seem to be saying, but expect the President to succeed in altering how the Muslim world views the U.S.

Stay tuned. This will be one to watch.

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