

US, Yemen face Al Qaida threat, Clinton says

"We face a common threat posed by the terrorists and Al Qaida but our partnership goes beyond counterterrorism," Clinton said in a statement after about two hours of talks with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

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Sana'a: Hillary Clinton made the first trip by a US Secretary of State to Yemen in 20 years on Tuesday to underline to the Sana'a government the urgency and importance of fighting Al Qaida at its grassroots.

"We face a common threat posed by the terrorists and Al Qaida but our partnership goes beyond counterterrorism," Clinton said in a statement after about two hours of talks with Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

"We are focused not just on short-term threats but long-term challenges," she added as Saleh stood beside her. "We support an inclusive political process that will in turn support a unified, prosperous, stable, democratic Yemen."

Clinton was in Sana'a seeking to convey to the Yemeni government the urgency of defeating Al Qaida's ideology by promoting long-delayed economic and political reforms. Yemen-based Al Qaida militants, engaged in hit-and-run attacks on Yemeni forces in recent months, have also grabbed the focus of Washington with failed plots to bomb cargo planes in October and to blow up a US passenger jet in 2009.

Also on Tuesday, Turkish President Abdullah Gul was in Sana'a heading a high-profile delegation visit described as the first-ever by a Turkish president since Turkey recognised the Republic of Yemen in 1970.