

Talking helps find solutions. Labels don't.

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Politico this morning highlights one consequence of the incredibly rapid change in power in Syria. As [they note in a newsletter](#):

Can we chat with proscribed terrorists? One of the big questions for Starmer will be whether his government will engage with HTS and al-Golani in the coming weeks and months. This is because HTS was proscribed as a terrorist organization in the U.K. in May 2017, with the Home Office declaring it should be treated as an “alternative name” for al Qaeda. The PM said on Sunday night that it was “very early days” when asked if the U.K. would engage with HTS.

The issue is real. It obviously has consequences in Gaza, the example.

What the question highlights is the obvious folly of prescribing organisations as terrorists. We really should know this by now.

Mandela moved from terrorist to revered states-person.

Closer to home, Martin McGuinness moved from terrorist to deputy first minister of Northern Ireland, and shaker of the Queen’s hand.

Like it or not, HTS will now have to be accommodated in some way.

The inference is obvious.

The question is when will we stop putting impediments to progress created by political posturing on our part in the path to workable (even if not optimal) political solutions that in turn pave the way to better outcomes?

It is very unlikely that Syria has an optimal solution today. But, talking will help create one. It’s time we recognised that without talks nothing is resolved, and posturing rarely helps that.