

Preserving the Power

LINK: You'll turn the guns Syria has pointed at ISIL to the US.

Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, in Forbes – September 13, 2014

In Syria the administration should set priorities. The Islamic State is far more dangerous than the Assad government. The apparent belief that a few extra guns will allow the weak moderate opposition to simultaneously defeat the government and Islamic State is a “fantasy,” as the president earlier intoned. Moreover, many “moderates” are merely “caliphate lite,” admit even State Department officials. The Free Syrian Army continues to cooperate with ISIL at times and “moderate” insurgents may have sold U.S. journalist Steven Sotloff to the Islamic State. Worse, assistance to these groups will only further tie down the Syrian army, which could be fighting the Islamic State. So long as the administration is determined to oust the Assad regime, Damascus will have an incentive to target U.S.-supported groups rather than ISIL. The administration should exit the Syrian imbroglio and leave bombing Islamist forces in Syria to the Assad government.

LINK: American actions breed resentment for intervention and support for terrorism, Jordan proves.

Ala' Alrababa'h, junior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Middle East Program – December 11, 2014

Support for terrorist groups inside Jordan is already worrying. According to a late-September survey, only 62 percent of the population believed the Islamic State is a terrorist group, while only 31 percent viewed members of the Nusra Front, which is al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria, as terrorists. Jordanian analysts fear that the U.S.-led coalition against the Islamic State and the Nusra Front will increase the support for these groups, given the widespread popular resentment of U.S. policies in the region. This is especially true because the United States is fighting the Islamic State, a Sunni group, while avoiding attacks on the root of Syria's troubles, its president, Bashar al-Assad.

IMPACT: Urban warfare requires the trust of the people.

Louis DiMarco, associate professor of military history at USA Command and General Staff College, *Concrete Hell* – 2012, p. 215

Future urban military operations, as the historical record supports, will not just be about urban combat. Because the civilian population is integral to the urban environment, urban combat must be closely and effectively coordinated and synchronized with political policy. It will not be possible to execute truly successful urban combat operations unless those operations account for the welfare of the civilian population, and political policy ensures that the needs and grievances of urban residents are adequately satisfied. To help accomplish this, military leaders must carefully plan urban combat operations in conjunction with political guidance so that, unlike the French in Algiers, military victory does not contribute to political defeat. One of the keys to the success of urban combat is to ensure that military forces conducting urban combat represent the urban population. This may be impossible for a foreign military force to achieve, therefore it is imperative that any military operations in urban areas are conducted by combined forces that include representatives of the urban population. General MacArthur understood that the politics of urban combat are as important as the tactics, and he therefore ensured that the X Corps included a small but very politically important South Korean military component. Similarly, 1BCT of 1st Armored Division ensured that all of its operations in Ramadi included elements of the Iraqi army and if possible the Iraqi police; not for their military capability but for the legitimizing influence they had with the civilian population; and for the political effects that Iraqi army success had on the stability of the Iraqi government. Commanders in urban combat must always remember that war is for political purposes, and in urban combat political purposes often are more important than tactical military requirements.

IMPACT: Not opposing Assad also gives support to Jabhat al-Nusra.

Jennifer Cafarella, fellow at the Institute for the Study of War – December 2014

The U.S. must actually adopt an anti-Assad strategy in order to prevent JN from subsuming the moderate opposition. Opposition to Assad drives the recruitment and radicalization of jihadists. JN is ostensibly committed to fighting the regime, making them more attractive than both ISIS and the U.S. Furthermore, JN is capitalizing on a feeling of betrayal and resentment from the Syrian population toward the international military coalition against ISIS to penetrate more deeply into rebel ranks and the fabric of Syrian society.

The Iranian Threat

LINK: Iran would respond if we increased our presence.

Michael Crowley, Politico – March 25, 2015

“The U.S. military is very concerned that the Iranians will come after American personnel in Iraq,” says Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA analyst and Brookings Institution scholar close to the Pentagon. “It’s clearly something that’s been on their mind for a while.” One military official said there is no imminent Iranian threat to

Americans in Iraq, who operate from the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad and from joint command centers with Iraqi and Kurdish forces. But **sources said the potential danger is factored into U.S. military planning. Debates about troop levels in Iraq, for instance, are shaped in part by concerns that a larger force creates a bigger potential target for Iran.**

LINK: Iran sees the US as the root of the problem.

Dina Efsandiary and Ariane Tabatabai, Chatham House Royal Institute of International Affairs – January 2015

Tehran argues that the creation of ISIS can be attributed to western policies in the region. In the words of Zarif: ‘ISIS is the product of two things. First is the US invasion of Iraq, and the foreign presence that creates a dynamic of resistance. Second is the feeling of disequilibrium, which has prevailed in some countries in the region since the fall of Saddam. They are trying to change the status quo.’ To combat ISIS,

Zarif argued, the ‘fertile ground’ provided by the group’s ideology ‘must be removed’ and ‘policies in the region need to be changed, especially regarding Palestine. They exacerbate this sense of resentment.’ In other words, ‘dealing with interests and abuses of inequalities’ will help combat the ideology of ISIS.¹⁵

IMPACT: The nuclear deal is supposed to create cooperation, not competition.

Seif Dana, sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside for Al Jazeera – April 14, 2015

Neither Iran nor the US is interested in military confrontation and both have much to gain from an agreement. But since this deal will constitute a building block towards diplomatically resolving other regional conflicts involving Iran and the US, all sides have been negotiating with their eyes on the future.

An American Bailout

LINK: Deployment secures an autocrat's position in power, history proves.

Barbara Elias, assistant professor of government at Bowdoin College, in the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs – June 27, 2014

In part, the current situation is the result of significant incentives the United States has unintentionally created through its lengthy military interventions in the Middle East. All allies have important overlapping interests (otherwise they wouldn't be allies) as well as important divergent interests (after all, this is international politics). **The particular problem with asymmetric alliances, where one partner controls an overwhelming majority of resources, is that the smaller ally—like Maliki's Iraq and Karzai's Afghanistan—does not fear for its immediate survival because a much larger power, such as the United States, is committed to its success. With their survival principally guaranteed (an overlapping interest), small allies can then focus on areas of interest that diverge from those of their large allies. Maliki can propagate sectarian policies, and Karzai can extend patronage networks. The United States, meanwhile, continues to focus on thwarting insurgents and terrorists—much to the benefit of Karzai and Maliki, but not requiring much sacrifice on their part.** Interventions are difficult policy problems. While allies naturally have some divergent and some convergent interests, it is quite problematic if their primary security objectives differ. Pakistan made this lesson painful clear to the United States in the process of working "together" in Afghanistan. **Mismatched objectives between allies create inefficiencies at best, and stalemate or quagmire at worst. In asymmetric alliances with foreign military interventions, this effect is exacerbated because small allies feel empowered to pursue divergent interests by the security provided by the intervening ally. With their security guaranteed for the moment by a foreign power, actors like Maliki or Karzai instead focus on issues the United States will not take care of on their behalf, such as sectarian interests. Foreign interventions by powerful states provide incentives for local allies to freeload for their own security, and to focus on positions not shared with their allies. Over time, this behavior becomes routine and the sectarian divisions or patronage networks that brought these actors to prominence become institutionalized in government.**

LINK: American action will lessen the impetus for other countries to act.

Doug Bandow, senior fellow at the Cato Institute, in Forbes – September 13, 2014

The president admitted that America cannot "take the place of Arab partners in securing their region." However, under his plan the U.S. will be deeply involved, ostentatiously taking the public lead, providing much of the muscle, and directing other nations' activities. By relieving those most at risk of responsibility for confronting a threat against them, the administration will discourage them from responding appropriately.

LINK: Countries have no prerogative to act.

Graham Allison, professor of government and director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard University – Fall/Winter 2014-2015

ISIL poses—first and foremost—a threat to Iraqi, Syria, and neighbors in Saudi Arabia, the Gulf, Turkey, and Iran. Strategic patience on our part will be required to concentrate the minds of these states, maximizing their incentives to respond—not just to wait for Uncle Sam.

LINK: The US fails in the war on terror because they are afraid to confront allies.

Patrick Cockburn, Middle East correspondent for The Independent, *The Rise of the Islamic State* – 2015, p. 31

The “war on terror” has failed because it did not target the jihadi movement as a whole and, above all, was not aimed at Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, the two countries that fostered jihadism as a creed and a movement. The US did not do so because these countries were important American allies whom it did not want to offend.

Saudi Arabia is an enormous market for American arms, and the Saudis have cultivated, and on occasion purchased, influential members of the American political establishment. Pakistan is a nuclear power with a population of 180 million and a military with close links to the Pentagon.

IMPACT: Saudi financing is relevant across the region for terrorism.

Yousaf Butt, senior advisor to the British American Security Information Council and director at the Cultural Intelligence Institute, for the Berggruen Institute – January 20, 2015

It would be troublesome but perhaps acceptable for the House of Saud to promote the intolerant and extremist Wahhabi creed just domestically. But, unfortunately, for decades the Saudis have also lavishly financed its propagation abroad. Exact numbers are not known, but it is thought that more than \$100 billion have been spent on exporting fanatical Wahhabism to various much poorer Muslim nations worldwide over the past three decades. It might well be twice that number. By comparison, the Soviets spent about \$7 billion spreading communism worldwide in the 70 years from 1921 and 1991.

This appears to be a monumental campaign to bulldoze the more moderate strains of Islam, and replace them with the theo-fascist Saudi variety.

Despite being well aware of the issue, Western powers continue to coddle the Saudis or, at most, protest meekly from time to time. For instance, a Wikileaks cable clearly quotes then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton saying "donors in Saudi Arabia constitute the most significant source of funding to Sunni terrorist groups worldwide."

She continues: "More needs to be done since Saudi Arabia remains a critical financial support base for al-Qaeda, the Taliban, LeT and other terrorist groups."

And it's not just the Saudis: Qatar, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates are also implicated in the memo.

Other cables released by Wikileaks outline how Saudi front companies are also used to fund terrorism abroad.