

Because we are a city upon a hill, Matthew and I negate; resolved: Committing United States ground combat troops to fight ISIL is in the best interest of the United States.

Contention One: Preserving the Power

By prioritizing the fight against ISIL above all else, the United States puts the goal of ousting Bashar al-Assad on the backburner.

Doug Bandow explains that assisting Syrian moderate rebels gives the Syrian government an incentive to shift military resources away from the fight against ISIL to the fight against the rebels.

This is problematic because the United States cannot afford to drag out its presence, so it needs all hands on deck, which includes Syria. As such, an American intervention against ISIL entails tacit compliance with Assad's actions.

This has a three-fold implication.

First, Assad represented an extremely repressive regime in the Middle East, a lynchpin of why ISIL gained so much traction in the first place. Preserving his position in power only ensures that he can enact the same reprisals against his people that spawn support for extremism.

Second, we lose the support of the people. **Ala' Alrababa'h at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace underscores** that US policies face resentment among citizens of countries like Jordan because they're seen as self-serving policies that don't address the roots of the problems many face in the Middle East, most of which is Bashar al-Assad.

Without local support, the United States cannot win.

Louis DiMarco writes in his book *Concrete Hell* that winning urban campaigns, like the one fighting ISIL would entail, requires the representation of political grievances of the people. Otherwise, it can be difficult to garner local support required for intelligence.

Third, we build up support for another terrorist organization. **Jennifer Cafarella from the Institute for the Study of War highlights** that an anti-Assad strategy is necessary because other extremist organizations, like Jahbat al-Nusra, use the idea of opposing Assad as a means of recruitment, capitalizing on sentiments of betrayal that populations have toward the international military coalition.

Contention Two: The Iranian Threat

As Iran increases its presence, it crowds out the United States. While scaling up United States forces could compete with Iran, it only makes Iran more belligerent.

Michael Crowley from Politico reports that one consideration for American military advisors is that a greater American presence in the region could merely be a larger target for Iranian retaliation.

Dina Esfandiary of Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, continues that Iran sees American involvement in Iraq as the reason why ISIL became prevalent in the first place.

Therefore, it makes sense that Iran would respond negatively to a greater American force.

Beyond direct violence, the United States jeopardizes progress on Iran's nuclear program.

Seif Da'na from the University of Wisconsin-Parkside highlights that Iranian negotiations were predicated on establishing future diplomatic goodwill for regional conflicts.

Opposing Iran now sets the stage for the nuclear agreement to fall through, undermining significant US interests in the region.

Contention Three: An American Bailout

The America message that it will provide security is harmful for three reasons.

First, it props up rulers. **Barbara Elias in the Georgetown Journal of International Affairs explains** that when a large power like the United States is committed to the survival of smaller states like Iraq, leaders have no pressure to survive. Protected by a foreign military force, these leaders then can pursue interests that not only diverge from American interests but also exacerbate sectarian tensions. The behavior of freeloading on outside security guarantees allows leaders to institutionalize these behaviors, which happened in Iraq and Afghanistan in this past decade.

Second, it undermines the coalition. **Doug Bandow of the Cato Institute writes** that the United States would be taking the public lead in efforts to oust ISIL, but in that process, the United States relieves regional neighbors of having to confront the threat themselves and to respond appropriately.

Graham Allison from Harvard University's Belfer Center corroborates that "strategic patience" should be exercised to maximize the incentive for regional countries to act and not wait on the United States.

Only with the participation of Arab nations can the Middle East be reconstructed with regional interests in mind.

Third, it fails to address the real war on terror. **Patrick Cockburn, in his book *The Rise of the Islamic State*, argues** that the United States has failed in defeating jihadists because it hasn't been willing to confront regional allies, like Saudi Arabia.

As Yousaf Butt from the Cultural Intelligence Institute elaborates, Saudi Arabia has contributed \$100 billion to Sunni extremist organizations in the past three decades, representing the largest source of funding.

The problem of financing terrorist organizations is not new, and these countries haven't taken sufficient steps to prevent terrorist financing because they have no reason to – they're protected because of American guarantees.