

Talking Points for CBS Face the Nation
Sunday, August 17, 2014
Iraq/ISIL

- ISIL controls a land mass the size of Indiana – stretching from Eastern Syria to Western Iraq. They have helicopters and tanks and are flush with cash. Thousands of fighters hold Western passports, allowing them to easily travel to Europe or the U.S. ISIL represents a direct threat to the United States and must be confronted militarily with a significant disruption soon before it's too late.
- What should we do to confront ISIL? The Peshmerga in the Kurdish-controlled territory of Iraq has been begging for more weapons and intelligence packages. We should provide that immediately. We should provide whatever military support the Iraqi government needs. We should conduct more robust air strikes and reengage with the Sunni tribal leaders who were so important during the Sunni Awakening that broke the back of al Qa'ida in Iraq in 2006 and 2007. Perhaps most importantly, we should establish an enduring solution with our Arab League and GCC partners to address the ISIL threat emanating from both Iraq AND Syria. If we merely push ISIL back into Syria where they are free to plot and plan from a safe haven from which they know the United States will not attack, we will continue to deal with this threat for years to come.
- While a political solution in Baghdad is important to the long-term success of Iraq, there is a much more urgent threat we face that cannot wait. Certainly, I was no fan of Maliki and am pleased he is gone. But while we wait to aggressively deal with ISIL, women are being sold into slavery. Children are being beheaded, ancient churches are being destroyed and the terrorists are hunkering down, consolidating their gains.
- When we pulled out of Iraq completely, prematurely in my judgment, we lost all leverage we had with the Maliki government. This should be a lesson for Afghanistan as well and I hope the President will reconsider his decision to withdraw completely as he did in Iraq.
- The intelligence on Iraq/Syria/ISIL has been clear for a long time. There are no good options but the longer we wait, the worse the options get. The likelihood of an attack against the Homeland and the West will continue to rise until the President does something to shift the momentum. The solution will have to be local but nobody else has the power to lead an effective counteroffensive. I'm afraid this is more about the intelligence not fitting the President's narrative, than any failure to warn.
- The brutality ISIL is displaying should remind us and the world of the agenda al Qa'ida-inspired terrorists bring. This is what the Taliban wants in Afghanistan. This is what Boko Haram wants in Nigeria. This is what AQAP wants in Yemen. And unless these groups are met with force,

they have shown what they will do. They will kill men, women and children. They will kill Christians, Jews and Muslims alike to achieve their radical agenda.

- As many as 1,500 Yazidis and Christians may have been forced into sex slavery and human trafficking, the UN reports.
- We should not let Iran solve the problem of the U.S. and our allies in the Middle East. The U.S. failure to adequately respond to this threat has created a leadership vacuum in the Iraq and the Middle East that Tehran is only too happy to fill.
- Does the President need to go to the Congress for approval before acting militarily in Iraq? No, I believe the President has all of the authority he needs and ISIL clearly presents a clear and present danger to the United States of America.
- Should President Obama appoint someone like Ryan Crocker or David Petraeus Special Envoy to Iraq to solve the problem? I'm not sure that is necessary. This is not a people problem, this is a policy problem. Simply shifting the personalities won't solve a failed policy.

Political Zingers

- To suggest that the current situation in Iraq is not directly related to our policy failure in Syria is just not being honest. Not recognizing reality makes us prone to make additional, costly mistakes down the road.
- ISIL's takeover of large swaths of Iraq and Syria prove the point that if these problems are not dealt with upfront, they only become worse and more difficult to solve later.
- I'm not sure what Iraq looks like from the President's chair, but from mine it looks like a disaster that requires a major U.S.-led response. I don't sense the urgency from the Commander in Chief. We need a robust, comprehensive strategy to defeat ISIL. You can't kill a vicious tiger with a pin prick to the leg.
- The President's foreign policy of "singles" and "doubles" has devolved into racking up errors.
- President Obama said that ISIL was the jayvee team with varsity jerseys on. Boy if ISIL is the jayvee team, I hate to see what the varsity team looks like.
- Nah, I gave Tom my pithy poke about how ISIL is like cockroaches, you can't just push them back. It's not like they are an armed force from a country and we just push them home. They hide where they are safe, and keep coming back. We must have a plan to eliminate them.