

Obama's ISIS Strategy: Bi-Partisan Consensus on a Prolonged Military Campaign

By [Shamus Cooke](#)

Global Research, September 13, 2014

Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

In-depth Report: [SYRIA](#)

Obama's ISIS speech would have provoked outrage if Bush gave it. Now, however, Democrats and Republicans are united over foreign war to such an extent that a prolonged military campaign without congressional approval barely raises an eyebrow. So one year after an attack on Syria was rejected by the American public bombs will be dropping after all.

More surprising than the bi-partisan escalation of Middle East war is the complete absence of strategy. Obama's speech ignored the fundamental causes of ISIS' rise, while putting forth a military strategy of pure fantasy. The only guarantee of Obama's war strategy is the unnecessary prolonging of the Syrian conflict and the further growth of Islamic extremism. It's as if President Obama hasn't figured out the ABC's of terrorism: the more you bomb, the more extremists you create. It isn't rocket science.

The 13-year "war on terror" has fundamentally failed, creating an exponential growth in Islamic extremism, now sprawling across the very epicenter of the Middle East where its presence before was miniscule.

The president's speech ignored how his strategy to fight the secular Syrian government — funding, training, and arming the Syrian rebels — has directly contributed to creating giant militias of Islamic extremists, filled with money and jihadists from Obama's Gulf state allies of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Kuwait. If not for the U.S.-backed rebels in Syria, the conflict would have ended long ago, and ISIS would have remained marginal.

But instead of admitting that this failed approach helped create ISIS, Obama has doubled down on his ludicrous plan to further arm and finance the "moderate" opposition in Syria. The New York Times discussed the [holes in Obama's strategy](#):

"... Mr. Obama is still wrestling with a series of challenges, including how to train and equip a viable ground force to fight ISIS inside Syria, how to intervene without aiding President Bashar al-Assad, and how to enlist potentially reluctant partners like Turkey and Saudi Arabia."

None of these issues are to be resolved, only compounded. Of course President Assad will benefit if Obama attacks his enemy ISIS, in the same way that ISIS has been benefitting the last two years from the U.S.-backed proxy war against President Assad.

Further exposing these issues is the highly regarded Middle East journalist Patrick Cockburn, who predicted Obama's foolish speech [with precision](#):

“So far it looks as if Mr. Obama will dodge the main problem facing his campaign against Isis. He will not want to carry out a U-turn in U.S. policy by allying himself with President Assad, though the Damascus government is the main armed opposition to Isis in Syria. He will instead step up a pretense that there is a potent “moderate” armed opposition in Syria, capable of fighting both Isis and the Syrian government at once. Unfortunately, this force scarcely exists in any strength and the most important rebel movements opposed to Isis are themselves jihadis such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham and the Islamic Front. Their violent sectarianism is not very different to that of Isis.”

Later in the article Cockburn explains that the negligible moderate force is dominated by the CIA. Obama dared not say explicitly that his plan to fight ISIS included a plan to fight the Syrian government, but that’s exactly what he implied by continuing to arm, fund, and train a “moderate” Syrian opposition that is fighting both ISIS and Assad.

Obama’s bombing campaign against ISIS can thus rapidly transition into a regime change bombing of the Syrian Government, as happened in the U.S.-led NATO bombing campaign in Libya that began as “humanitarian intervention” and veered into regime change after the first bomb dropped.

Before he announced the expansion of the war Obama claimed legal authorization to bomb without Congressional approval. The U.S. House Judiciary Chair [issued a different opinion](#). And Democrats, too, had a different opinion when Bush was in office.

But now many congressmen from both parties would like Obama to act without Congress, since midterm elections are nearing and no congressman wants to be on record voting for war, since Americans are fed up with it. Better to skip democracy and have the president declare war unilaterally, war weary voters be damned.

Lastly, Obama failed to mention that perpetual war is the new normal for the U.S. government, no matter which party is elected. By not addressing any of the above-mentioned issues, a serious analysis was shelved in favor of the Bush Jr. circular logic that can be used to rationalize war forever, creating new generations of Islamic extremists that will justify permanent war. There can be only one real solution: remove the U.S. military from the Middle East.

Shamus Cooke is a social service worker, trade unionist, and writer for Workers Action (www.workerscompass.org). He can be reached at shamuscooke@gmail.com

The original source of this article is Global Research
Copyright © [Shamus Cooke](#), Global Research, 2014

[Comment on Global Research Articles on our Facebook page](#)

[Become a Member of Global Research](#)

Articles by: [Shamus Cooke](#)

Disclaimer: The contents of this article are of sole responsibility of the author(s). The Centre for Research on Globalization will not be responsible for any inaccurate or incorrect statement in this article. The Centre of Research on Globalization grants permission to cross-post Global Research articles on community internet sites as long the source and copyright are acknowledged together with a hyperlink to the original Global Research article. For publication of Global Research articles in print or other forms including commercial internet sites, contact: publications@globalresearch.ca

www.globalresearch.ca contains copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available to our readers under the provisions of "fair use" in an effort to advance a better understanding of political, economic and social issues. The material on this site is distributed without profit to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving it for research and educational purposes. If you wish to use copyrighted material for purposes other than "fair use" you must request permission from the copyright owner.

For media inquiries: publications@globalresearch.ca