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Perpetual War, and Shame, Is Our Policy

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I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles -- principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings. -- President Barack Obama, Cairo, Egypt, June 4, 2009

The United States' official policy in the Middle East is now perpetual war. What has been known for some time, including by those of us who have served overseas, by the millions who have suffered through our bombs and our bullets, and, of course, by the hundreds of thousands whose lives have been ripped from their families and from any promised futures, President Obama solidified last night.

The United States, by agreeing to airstrikes without end in support of a corrupt and sectarian government in Baghdad; by championing a Shia and Kurdish invasion of Sunni lands; and by promising arms, munitions and money to rebel groups in the middle of the Syrian Civil War, the same groups that sold Steven Sotloff to his beheading, has adopted a policy that will exacerbate the civil wars in both Iraq and Syria and deepen the nightmare existence of their people. President Obama's speech will be remembered as a mark of moral shame on the United States, so

very opposite and so very contradictory to the courage shown by the president five years ago in Cairo, Egypt.

Today, on the thirteenth anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, it is clear to me that the cowardice evinced by the president is directly proportional to the never-ending 9/11 fear mongering that continues to paralyze and retard this country. In reply to the deliberate provocation by the Islamic State through the ghastly executions of journalists James Foley and Steven Sotloff, the United States has fulfilled the Islamic State's wishes by committing to add more violence to the uncontrollable cycle of violence that has already authored the deaths of 700,000 Iraqis and Syrians.

Pressured by the panicked and hysterical cries of members of Congress, President Obama offered no solutions to the underlying political causes of the civil wars in Iraq and Syria, instead he obligated the American public to a renewed partaking and sharing in the bloodshed and slaughter along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers.

Towards Iraq, the president offered familiar axioms about the necessity of a political resolution, but he gave no assurances that Sunni grievances would be addressed nor did he explain how the United States would force the government in Baghdad to make much needed concessions in order to achieve political order. Rather, the reality of what America has pledged to do in Iraq is to assist in Shia subjugation of the Sunnis by U.S. bombing of Sunni villages, towns and cities. The American military will also ensure the Kurds keep the oil fields they seized this summer in Northern Iraq, effectively strangling the Sunnis economically. In turn, the Sunnis, in existential desperation, will give full support to the Islamic State. How this does not bring Iraq back to the violence of 2006, or worse, I do not know.

With regards to Syria, the president did not even attempt to make comments towards a political process to end the fighting and the killing. The United States will simply add more to Syria's death and destruction. Yes, that is all; we will simply add more to it.

Whatever remaining partitions separating the wars in Iraq and Syria will soon disappear. When that occurs, I am unsure of how a political solution appears that will not require a re-drawing of boundaries and the creation of new states. Sadly, with the president's plan, I do not believe such a political solution will be available until murderous exhaustion has overcome the belligerent sects and ghostly no-man's lands delineate the end of one people and the beginning of another. Through all that, as long as the United States is shackled with the debilitating psychosis of 9/11 and the resultant moral weakness of our elected officials, the Middle East will be full of targets for our bombs, Iraqi and Syrian mothers and fathers will raise children destined to kill and be killed, jihadist narratives of Crusaders will be validated, and our perpetual war will be as boundless as our shame.