

President Obama Defends His 'Robust' Strategy Against ISIS After Paris Attacks

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The Islamic State, or ISIS, has always called on Muslims to engage in violent, lone wolf, attacks in the West, if they are unable to "emigrate" to its territory in Syria and Iraq. Showing mercy in a way "stewards" of Islam like Saudi Arabia (Syrian refugees accepted = zero) or self-proclaimed standards like ISIS (which has created countless refugees) speaks louder than any catch phrases about American leadership. While such approaches worked in Afghanistan in 2001, northern Iraq in 2003, Basra in 2008 and Kunduz a month ago, they have not really been tried against the Islamic State.

The impulse to do "something, anything is an understandable reaction" to the Paris attacks, says Emma Ashford, visiting fellow in foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute in Washington.

World leaders must combine efforts to extinguish the terror of the Islamic State.

"This sudden shortfall has led to a careful rethinking by ISIS high command of how inhabitants outside of Syria and Iraq can best serve the cause".

Obama maintained that he would continue working with other countries including Russian and Iran to help combat the threat of ISIS. And it appears to be doing that by expanding its focus to include attacks against the "far enemy". "The one responsible for the attacks in Paris... he is a criminal and not a refugee and not an asylum seeker", he told a news conference on the sidelines of a G20 summit of world leaders in Turkey. In a word, defeat.

"We have allowed ISIS to have sanctuary in Syria and Iraq with too much time to plan and plot, too much resources to be directed against us", Schiff said.

IS lost control of the town of Sinjar in north-western Iraq on November 12 when Kurdish Peshmerga forces recaptured it. This cut the group's supply lines between its main base in Raqqa, Syria and its stronghold in Mosul, Iraq.

A third suicide bomber, Ismael Mostefai, 29, had already been named by police, after being identified through remains found at the Bataclan music hall, another of the six separate attack sites across Paris and its suburbs.

France had feared strikes in Syria could be counter-productive and could strengthen President Bashar al-Assad, who has been fighting a rebellion against his rule since 2011.

Furthermore, the allied air campaign, including the French air force's from October, has been devastating. In 1980, that number was 207,000, a record high. And it is in refining that ISIS really makes most of its revenue - but mostly these are mobile units that are hard to attack.

Defense Secretary Ashton Carter for his part met with military commanders Wednesday, according to Pentagon officials, "asking them to consider where the coalition effort in Iraq and Syria can be expanded".

He pointedly defended his comments that he had contained ISIS, which happened just hours before the attacks took place in Paris. This would have the knock-on effect of rallying IS supporters and inspiring new recruits. Its propaganda machine requires it to have "success" stories.

For Obama, the frustration and panic the Paris attacks have provoked at home are both completely understandable and a stark reminder of the unsafe overreaction that such strikes can produce.

The biggest potential limiting factor for ISIS may be opposition from other Muslims. "Now is the time, not merely to contain the Islamic State, but to eradicate it once and for all". In the case of the Paris attacks it is clearly ISIS' own demoralized supporters and the French public who could easily be whipped up into enthusiasm for a military attack on ISIS-which is precisely what ISIS wants. If the government today in Iraq-and in Syria-were to politically embrace the Sunni Arabs in their countries ISIS would began to crumble from within. Such feelings arise from a complex set of factors.

Almost all the French, Iraqi and USA officials providing information for this story spoke on condition of anonymity because they lack authorization to share details publicly.