

# The New Strategy To Defeat ISIS

President Trump and Secretary of Defense Mattis are unveiling a new strategy to defeat ISIS. In addition to forming the first coalition of Arab states to work in tandem with the U.S. in ferreting out and destroying radical Islamic terrorists, the President and Defense Secretary have moved American war fighting from a campaign to liberate lands held by ISIS to a campaign to eradicate ISIS.

The shift is a momentous change in U.S. foreign policy and military strategy, yet it is going by with hardly any notice from the media. By integrating military and military intelligence operations across allied Arab states, the United States for the first time is gaining the means to eliminate its enemies before they cross over to ISIS training camps and terrorist operations. By changing war fighting from a campaign to retake lands occupied by ISIS to one aiming to eradicate ISIS, the prospect for ending terror is now a real one.

In Mosul, for example, Defense Secretary Mattis is encircling the terrorists, not only to cut off their lines of supply and reinforcement, but also to ensure that they are not able to escape and reform elsewhere. He means to kill them, and he intends to allow no terrorist to escape if at all possible.

That approach also creates a huge new disincentive for ISIS. A minority of those who fight for the caliphate are in the end willing to die for it. When defeated, more ISIS fighters flee and go AWOL than stay and fight to the death. When death is imminent, ideology takes a back seat, and only the most hard core of the hard core will expose themselves to certain death if they can avoid it.

Consequently, Defense Secretary Mattis's approach of eradicating terrorists rather than liberating lands includes a bonus benefit for the United States. Consistent use of this approach will strongly dissuade those who join ISIS for any reason other than suicide. As Mattis hunts down and eliminates every terrorist through a consistent pattern of eradication, he makes manifest that America intends not to defeat ISIS but to eliminate it. There is then no refuge, no safe haven, no sure way to regroup, no opportunity to recede from the field of battle. It is all war all the time and a war to win by eliminating the enemy, not just defeating it.

That extraordinary change from the Obama years, when the military was hamstrung and denied the opportunity to obliterate the enemy, offers a genuine prospect of restoring peace and civilization to the world. President Obama harbored sympathies for our enemies, not just the Iranians but the terrorists themselves. He was unwilling to allow our military to fight to the nth degree. He imposed limits on engagement that not only ensured the escape and reformation of terrorist enemies but also increased the risks our military faced on a daily basis in combat. Many of our best and bravest died precisely because Obama chose to limit their ability to fight, allow terrorists to escape lethal force, and release prisoners from GITMO who have predictably returned to support and commit acts of terror.

We should all be grateful for the momentous changes afoot. With few exceptions, such as Qatar and Iran, the leaders of the Arab world are accepting President Trump's challenge and Saudi Arabia's lead in supporting the war against radical Islamic terrorism. Already we see a change in the rhetoric coming from Iran. Like North Korea, Russia, and China, Iran cannot predict what President Trump and Defense Secretary Mattis will do if provoked. It is engendering a hesitancy on their part that did not exist in the Obama years. There will come a time in the not so distant future when American leaders

will be tested by new conflicts that are unavoidable, but this President unlike his predecessor will likely react in powerful and unpredictable ways to our great strategic advantage.

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