

Congressmen Skewer Obama's War Policy

The following are excerpts from statements in the House and Senate opposing the Administration's policy against ISIS/ISIL/Islamic State.

House of Representatives, Sept. 17

Rep. Beto O'Rourke (D-Tex.): Saudi Arabia is the most successful exporter of terrorism throughout the world. The logical conclusion [of this proposal] is to depose Assad, and replace him with a government of rebels. We've done this three times in the last 10 years; and the fourth country is Libya. No Muslim countries are contributing ground troops.

Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.): I oppose [H.R. 124]. I am looking for a reason to support it, but I can't find it. It trains Islamists to fight Islamists in a few years. This is not only used against America's enemies. I served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq and Afghanistan. I won't vote for something that won't work. You don't crush the IS by training Islamic fighters. You can have no confidence you are arming the right people. The Saudi Arabians are the ones who provided the majority of hijackers. I refuse to work with Saudi Arabia.

Rep. Lloyd Doggett (D-Tex.): Despite billions expended and with courageous Americans on the ground, the results over more than a decade of trying to successfully train Iraqis and Afghans is not particularly encouraging; indeed, the reality is the American taxpayers have been compelled to pay for the arms for our enemies as well as our allies, nor do we have any explanation today as to how taking a few Syrians for training in Saudi Arabia—a country with its own brutal history of regular beheadings, financing extremists around the world, and opposing democracy almost everywhere—how that will work better than our previous training on the ground with Americans.

Rep. Joe Heck (R-Nev.): I can't support this bill. Arming Syrian rebels has always

been a fantasy. It's a plan destined to fail for the purpose of saying we did something.

In the Senate, Sept. 18

Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.):

We have before us one of the most important duties of the Senate and the Congress; that is, to decide whether we will be involved in war. I think it is inexcusable that the debate over whether we involve the country in war—another country's civil war—that this would be debated as part of a spending bill and not as part of an independent free-standing bill. . . . Instead of having a debate over war, we will have a debate over spending. . . .

Madam President, if there is a theme that connects the dots in the Middle East, it is that chaos breeds terrorism. What much of the foreign policy elite fail to grasp, though, is that intervention to topple secular dictators has been the prime source of the chaos. From Hussein to Assad to Qadhafi, it is the same history—intervention to topple the secular dictator. Chaos ensues and radical jihads emerge. The pattern has been repeated time and time again.

Yet what we have here is a failure to understand, a failure to reflect on the outcome of our involvement in Arab civil wars. They say nature abhors a vacuum. Radical jihadists have again and again filled the chaotic vacuum of the Middle East. Secular dictators, despots who, frankly, *do* terrorize their own people, are replaced by radical jihadists, who seek terror not only at home but abroad. Intervention, when both choices are bad, is a mistake. Intervention, when both sides are evil,



Sen. Rand Paul

is a mistake. Intervention that destabilizes the Middle East is a mistake. Yet here we are again, wading into a civil war. I warned a year ago that involving us in Syria's civil war was a mistake, that the inescapable irony is that some day the arms we supply would be used against us or Israel. *That day is now.*

ISIS has grabbed up from the United States, from the Saudis, and from the Qataris, weapons by the truckload. We are now forced to fight against our own weapons, and this body wants to throw more weapons into the mix. Even those of us who have been reluctant to get involved in Middle Eastern wars feel, now that American interests are threatened, that our consulate and our embassy are threatened, we feel that if ISIS is left to its own devices, maybe they will fulfill what they have boasted of and attack our homeland.

So, yes, we must now defend ourselves from these barbarous jihadists. But let's not compound the problem by arming feckless rebels in Syria, who seem to be merely a pit stop for weapons that are really on their way to ISIS. Remember clearly that the President and his Republican allies have been clamoring for over a year for airstrikes against Assad. Assad was our enemy last year. This year he is our friend. Had all of those airstrikes, though, occurred last year in Syria, today ISIS might be in Damascus. Realize that ... involving ourselves in these complicated, thousand-year-long civil wars leads to unintended consequences....

We have not been sitting around doing nothing. Six hundred tons of weapons have already been given to the Syrian rebels. What happened during the period of time we gave 600 tons of weapons to the moderate rebels in Syria? ISIS grew stronger....

Many former officials are very forthright with their criticism. According to the former ambassador to Iraq and Syria, our ambassador says: We need to do everything we can to figure out who the non-ISIS opposition is because, frankly, *we don't have a clue*. Think about this: We are voting or obscuring a vote on a spending bill to send \$500 million worth of arms to Syria, to people who we say are the vetted moderate Syrian rebels. Guess what: One of the men with the most knowledge on the ground, who has been our ambassador to Syria, says we don't have a clue who the moderates are and who the jihadists are. And even if they tell you they are the moderates, they say: Oh, we love Thomas Jefferson. Give us a shoulder-fired missile. We love Thomas Jefferson.

Can you trust these people?...

I asked Secretary Kerry: Where do you get the authority to wage this war?

He says: From 2001.

Some of the people fighting weren't born in 2001. Many of the people who voted in 2001 are no longer living.

We voted to go to war in Afghanistan, and I supported going into that war, because we were attacked and we had to do something about it. But the thing is, that vote had nothing to do with this—absolutely nothing to do with this. You are a dishonest person if you say otherwise....

I said it yesterday: Mr. President, what you are doing is illegal and unconstitutional.

The response from Secretary Kerry was: We have Article II authority to do whatever we want.

That is absolutely incorrect. We gave power to the Commander in Chief to *execute* the war, but we were explicit that the wars were to be *initiated by Congress*....

There are valid reasons for war, but they should be few and far between. They should be very importantly debated and not shuffled into a 2,000-page bill and shoved under the rug.

When we go to war, it is the most important vote any Senator will ever take. Many on the other side have been better on this issue. When there was a Republican in office, there were loud voices on the other side.

I see an empty Chamber. There will be no voices against war because this is a Democratic President's war. The hypocrisy of that should resound in this nearly empty Chamber....

When we go to war, the burden of proof lies with those who wish to engage in war. They must convince the American people and convince Congress.... Until there is a vote—if there ever is one—this is *one man's war*. Our Founding Fathers would be offended, would be appalled to know that one man can create a war....

This President worries me, and it is not because of ObamaCare or Dodd-Frank or these horrific pieces of legislation. As I travel around the country, when people ask me, "What has the President done? What is the worst thing he has done?" It is the usurpation of power, the idea that there is no separation of powers or that he is above that separation. If you want to tremble and worry about the future of our Republic, listen to the President when he says: Well, Congress won't act; therefore, I must. Think about the implications of that....