

AGAINST DRUMBEAT OF WAR WITH ISIS, CHRIS MURPHY DELIVERS HEALTHY DOSE OF SKEPTICISM

Olivier Knox has a report this morning in which he interviewed Connecticut's Democratic Senator Chris Murphy about potential Congressional authorization for use of force against ISIS. Before we get to Murphy's tremendous response, it's worth taking a look at the incredibly wide range of fronts on which the drums are beating for a war with ISIS.

Consider this:

Furthermore, Gen. Dempsey has warned that ISIS cannot be defeated only in Iraq. He asserted, "Can they be defeated without addressing that part of the organization that resides in Syria? The answer is no."

In fact the very existence of terrorists from over 50 countries means that we must be thinking in terms of a global campaign to eradicate the virus of Islamic Extremism and the spirit of terrorism and barbarism that it is fostering. This is fully as grave a threat to our survival as was Nazism or communism. With appropriate strategies and consistent policies executed energetically we can defeat and eliminate the Islamic State and its various allied factions.

ISIS and its worldwide terrorist allies have become the focus of evil in the modern world.

Who said that? John McCain? No. Lindsey Graham?

No. Maybe Bill Kristol? No. Those are the words of zombie Ronald Reagan, appearing in a CNN column earlier this week penned by Newt Gingrich. The column carries the winsome title "What would Reagan do?", and it presents the speech Reagan would have given in response to the beheading of James Foley by ISIS. Well, the speech Reagan would have given if only he were alive and still president, that is.

For the war mongers on the right, ISIS has quickly become the "focus of evil in the modern world", and the enthusiasm with which they are urging full on war with ISIS is dizzying. Yesterday, I noted that John McCain's beloved "moderate" Free Syrian Army also is guilty of beheading victims and posting photos on social media, but of course the hand-wringing over Foley's beheading never allows for the fact that those we are being urged to arm against ISIS are guilty of many of the same crimes against humanity which are said to be fueling our desire to attack ISIS.

Yesterday, Marcy touched on the confusion surrounding the news that ISIS waterboarded Foley and other prisoners, since the US also has waterboarded prisoners in recent history.

So they guys we are supposed to arm against ISIS commit the same crimes as ISIS and ISIS is now copying US crimes, too, but somehow we are supposed to see ISIS as "the focus of evil in the modern world".

But wait, there's more!

We have to be upset, the New York Times warns us this morning, because there is now a flow of US citizens into the ranks of ISIS. And, as if that weren't enough to get the bubba crowd worked up, ISIS wants our womenfolk:

American intelligence and law enforcement agencies have identified nearly a dozen Americans who have traveled to Syria to fight for the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, the militant group that the Obama

administration says poses the greatest threat to the United States since Al Qaeda before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks.

As ISIS has seized large expanses of territory in recent months, it has drawn more foreign men to Syria, requiring more American and European law enforcement resources in the attempt to stop the flow of fighters, senior American officials said. And as a result of the increasing numbers of men, ISIS is now recruiting foreign women as jihadist wives.

Gosh, I wonder if "Jihadist Wives" will be a new spinoff from "Sister Wives" on TLC...

This morning, Marcy notes the "convenient" virgin birth of a second laptop of death. Yeah, you guessed it. This one has all the evil stuff ISIS has planned for us.

There is also yet another mass killing by ISIS where videos of the carnage can be found online. Although the URL for this article shows that the article initially was documenting the capture of a number of UN peacekeepers in Golan Heights by rebels, the Times makes no accusation that it was ISIS who captured them. CNN transcribes an anonymous Israeli military source as saying they were captured by al-Nusra Front, but since that group is so last year, there is much less chest-thumping over it. (Alex Jones does seem to think it was ISIS who captured them, but I don't link to him.)

Meanwhile, even before the US jumps in with whatever it would do (most likely lots of Hellfires), it becomes almost an afterthought to point out that half of all the residents of Syria already have been displaced by the fighting. I can't imagine what the humanitarian situation will look like should the US throw in some shock and awe.

With that as background, Chris Murphy's

statement to Olivier Knox today shows a tremendous amount of courage. [I should point out that I became a big Murphy fan at Netroots Nation 2014 in Detroit, when Murphy participated as a panelist in this session dedicated to the idea that diplomacy with Iran is much better than war. A sitting Senator taking part in a panel like any other panel member, sitting patiently through the other presentations and taking part in the ongoing discussion was particularly refreshing, especially when he was pointing out the advantages of diplomacy over war.]

Knox jumps right into the issue at the top of the piece:

Sen. Chris Murphy says he would be “very unlikely” to support expanding America’s military campaign against the brutal ISIL militia from Iraq into neighboring Syria. But the Connecticut Democrat says President Obama must seek explicit authorization from Congress if he decides to widen the conflict.

While a vote on launching a new U.S. intervention in the Middle East might put vulnerable Democrats further at risk come November, that’s not an excuse for Congress not to act, Murphy told Yahoo News by telephone on Thursday.

“This decision is too important to allow politics or elections to play a role,” he said. “It may be inconvenient that ISIS [another name for ISIL] has become a threat on the precipice of an election, but we have a responsibility as a coequal branch to do our constitutional job, regardless of the timing.”

Wait. What? I thought that the role of Congress these days is to cheer on endless war and to stand by idly while the Commander in Chief commands. And yet here comes Murphy, saying

stuff like don't let the election get in the way of doing the job the Constitution laid out for Congress.

It gets even better:

"The complexities of that conflict have only expanded since the president met congressional resistance a year ago on his initial plans for intervention in Syria," said Murphy, who worried aloud that striking ISIL "would have the consequence of empowering Assad."

Murphy spoke before Obama poured cold water Thursday on any suggestion that he was poised to order military action against ISIL (the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, also known as the Islamic State). "We don't have a strategy yet," the president said.

Obama promised to consult Congress, "in part because it may cost some money," a step that might require a vote.

"Funding is not authorization," Murphy said. "We have to pass a new authorization [for use] of military force in order to continue hostilities against ISIS. Simply appropriating money for the fight is not appropriate authorization."

Kudos to Murphy. "Simply appropriating money for the fight is not appropriate authorization" is a truly amazing thing to say in this day when all of Washington seems determined to fight.