

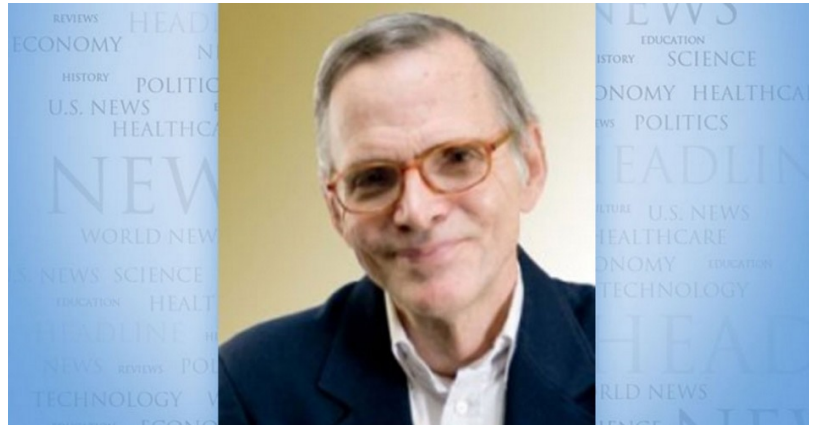


Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on May 20, 2015

Sen. Lindsey Graham Offers a Missile for Your Thoughts

Was it supposed to be a joke? Brendan James at [Talking Points Memo](#) said South Carolina Senator and presidential aspirant Lindsey Graham could be heard laughing as he told a GOP gathering in Des Moines, Iowa, Saturday night that he would “call a drone” to kill anyone thinking about joining al-Qaeda or the jihadists of the so-called Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant.

“If I’m president of the United States and you’re thinkin’ about joining al-Qaeda or ISIL — anybody thinkin’ about that? — I’m not going to call a judge, I’m going to call a drone and we will kill you,” Graham said at the Iowa Republican Party’s annual Lincoln Day Dinner.



If it was a joke, it might not seem very funny to people in far-off lands who were neither terrorists nor affiliated with them, but who nonetheless have lost arms or legs or eyes or other body parts, or have seen non-terrorist family and friends blown to bits by aptly named Hellfire missiles fired from unmanned aircraft called drones. Nor would it seem funny to people living in terror under drones hovering overhead and not knowing where to seek shelter because they have no way of knowing where the next deadly missile will fall. It is no funnier than Barack Obama’s tasteless joke at a White House correspondents dinner a few years ago when he quipped about how he would respond when boys started showing too much interest in his two young daughters.

“Drones!”

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It is no funnier than when George W. Bush went to a previous correspondents dinner and pretended to be searching under tables and chairs for those mysterious “weapons of mass destruction,” the pretext on which Bush based his disastrous invasion and years-long occupation of Iraq. It’s even less funny than when John McCain at one of his famous town hall gatherings in his 2008 presidential campaign responded to a question about Iran by singing, “Bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb bomb Iran.” Very funny. And very presidential.

And who knows if McCain was really joking, even if he was chuckling at the time? Maybe he and Graham both would like to “bomb, bomb, bomb, bomb bomb” Iran. They both called on President Obama to bomb Syria to stop President Assad from crushing the rebels, many of whom have since joined ISIL. McCain and Graham both [expressed regret](#) that the United States did not bomb enough in the 2011 air war over Libya, where Western military intervention turned that troubled land into a haven for jihadists.

And what about here in the States? Graham’s statement that he wouldn’t “call a judge” — presumably for a warrant — suggests that he was thinking — or well, okay, maybe “joking” — about human targets here in the homeland, which, according to Graham, is part of the battlefield in the war on terror. No point arresting someone who might be “thinkin’ about” or conspiring to make war against the United



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States, and then trying that person for treason in a fair and open court, as the Constitution requires. Shucks, no! Just zap 'im with a missile from a drone and be done with the terror-lovin' low-life.

A joke? Recall that it took a filibuster by Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.), holding up a vote on a new CIA director, to get then-Attorney General Eric Holder to finally concede that the president of the United States has no constitutional power to authorize drone strikes on American citizens here in "the homeland." No one should be on the president's "kill list" if he stays home right here in the good ol' U.S. of A. Traveling abroad is another story.

"I want to catch terrorists, but I also want to protect the Constitution," said Senator Paul, another of the GOP presidential hopefuls who spoke at the Lincoln Day Dinner. If Graham has any scruples about violating the Constitution, he keeps them well hidden. He told the Concord City Republican Committee in New Hampshire in March how he as president [would respond](#) to cuts by Congress to spending on the military and on intelligence operations:

I wouldn't let Congress leave town until we fix this. I would literally use the military to keep them in if I had to. We're not leaving town until we restore these defense cuts. We're not leaving town until we restore the intel cuts.

Another "joke"? Surely, a U.S. senator knows that under our Constitution the power of the purse belongs to Congress. And if Graham had any respect for and appreciation of the separation of powers, he would no more speak of the president using the military to keep Congress in session until it approves more spending than he would suggest that Congress might hold the president hostage in the White House until he signs a bill Congress wants enacted. Or keep the Supreme Court justices locked in their chambers until they reach the "right" decision on a crucial case.

But Graham clearly has no more respect for the Constitution than he has for the truth about recent history. "If you fought in Iraq it's not your fault it's going to hell. It's Obama's fault," he [said](#) Saturday night. "The person I blame is Barack Obama, not George W. Bush."

For all the jokes about political dinners on the "rubber-chicken circuit," that statement might have been the hardest thing to swallow, even at a solidly Republican event. There are plenty of things to blame on Obama without an attempt to rewrite history in a way that insults the intelligence of anyone over the age of 12. It was George W. Bush who invaded Iraq on a false pretext, disbanded the Iraqi security forces, and created the power vacuum that opened the door to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State. It was George W. Bush who sowed the winds of war, and we will be reaping the whirlwind for years, even decades to come.

"The more you drink, the better I sound, so keep drinking," Graham, the great entertainer, told the Iowa Republicans. Drink until Graham sounds better? Now that had to be a joke. No one could possibly drink *that* much.



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