



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 2, 2014

O, Mighty ISIS? The Cost of Fighting the Counterfeit Caliphate

June 29, 1787. The Philadelphia summer was  stifling and the heated debated inside the State House only added to the mugginess.

Rising once again to present a historical context to the controversy de jour, James Madison pronounced warning words that we need to hear 227 years later:

In time of actual war, great discretionary powers are constantly given to the Executive Magistrate. Constant apprehension of War, has the same tendency to render the head too large for the body. A standing military force, with an overgrown Executive will not long be safe companions to liberty. The means of defence against foreign danger have been always the instruments of tyranny at home. Among the Romans it was a standing maxim to excite a war, whenever a revolt was apprehended. Throughout all Europe, the armies kept up under the pretext of defending, have enslaved the people.

This week, as the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has declared a new caliphate stretching from Baghdad to Damascus and beyond, the fliers of false flags are busy here at home.

NBC, quoting unnamed intelligence officials and “experts,” warns that ISIS is an “immediate threat” to the safety of the United States. “The number of potential attackers is significantly greater than we have seen from any other safe haven since 9/11,” one of the experts quoted by NBC declared. “The lack of U.S-led disruptive activity means that elements in Syria and Iraq have greater freedom to plot than in any other safe haven,” he added.

As with the summoning of so many other such specters, there’s more statism than safety behind it. Less than generation ago, we were being warned that if we didn’t invade Iraq that Saddam Hussein would unleash a terror tornado of “weapons of mass destruction” that would devastate the United States.

Now, with the activities in the Afghan theater waning, there is an interventionist vacuum that neocons and other war hawks are anxious to fill.

But, is ISIS a threat? The question is legitimate because, in fairness, just because Congress has cried wolf before, doesn’t mean there isn’t a genuinely powerful predator licking his chops waiting for the right time to stain his teeth and claws.

Let’s examine some evidence of the alleged strength of ISIS.

First, there is this from Thomas Joscelyn at Long War Journal:

Nine leading rebel groups in Syria have rejected the Islamic State’s claim that it has established a Caliphate stretching across parts of Iraq and Syria.

In a statement released online, the nine groups say “the announcement by the rejectionists [the Islamic State] of a caliphate is null and void,” both “legally and logically.” The nine groups, all of which have long been opposed to the Islamic State, say that the announced Caliphate will not change how they deal with the organization.



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And this from NBC:

A Scud missile displayed in Raqqa, Syria, this week by ISIS is “more propaganda than operational” — meaning it is unlikely to pose a military threat — U.S. counterterrorism officials tell NBC News.

From CNN:

But many Muslims see the declaration of a caliphate as both apostasy and a ludicrous overreach by ISIS. The Syrian opposition council in Eastern Ghouta, an important area in the battle against the regime of Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, last week attacked any notion that ISIS could form a state.

“ISIS must delete the word ‘state’ from the name of the faction and to be jihadi faction because ISIS does not have tangible or religious structure,” the council said, in a statement obtained by the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

A spokesman for the Free Syrian Army in eastern Syria, Omar Abu Leila, described the declaration of the caliphate as “unbelievable.”

“There are millions of Syrians who are not with ISIS, so how can they speak about a caliphate in our land?” he said.

ISIS, it seems, is not that mighty.

As they have done so many times in run-ups to former foreign forays, the elected spokesmen for the military-industrial complex are insisting that there are but two choices: attack this threat in Iraq or wait and fight them over here.

Constitutionalists will recognize a third way.

Former congressman and consistent constitutionalist Ron Paul provides a road map for avoiding these senseless entanglements:

Because of the government’s foolish policy of foreign interventionism, the U.S. is faced with two equally stupid choices: either pour in resources to prop up an Iraqi government that is a close ally with Iran, or throw our support in with al-Qaida in Iraq (as we have done in Syria). I say we must follow a third choice: ally with the American people and spend not one more dollar or one more life attempting to re-make the Middle East. Haven’t we have already done enough damage?

It is our intervention in this historically hostile region that has served as nothing less than a recruitment drive for the enemies of the United States.

How much money have the neocons “legally” plundered from Americans in the name of protecting the homeland? Since 2006, over \$2 trillion!

That’s the financial cost of unconstitutional combat, but what of the other costs?

Nearly 7,000 members of the U.S. armed forces have died in the “War on Terror,” but that’s only the beginning of the tragedy.

It is impossible to put a number on the members of the military who have sought treatment for injuries — mental and physical — suffered in the Middle East. Over 970,000 disability claims have been filed with the Veterans Administration as of March 2014.

How many families is our government willing to sacrifice? How much mental illness is it willing to



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cause? How much American blood are they willing to spill needlessly to fight a foe that is demonstrably unable to touch the United States?

Beyond the senseless shedding of blood, there is the galling evidence that the weapons that would deliver death to American soldiers have been bought by our own government. As Pentagon Press Secretary Rear Admiral John Kirby recently admitted to reporters, ISIS militants are “driving some of these vehicles, they’re in possession of some of this stuff, but I’d be loathe to tell you that we actually have a really solid sense of what they’ve got.”

Finally, the question must be asked: Will the United States be any safer when Americans begin being sent home from Iraq in flag-draped coffins?

Americans, even those who favor an interventionist foreign policy, need not support this operation — one that will end in devastation, not of the homeland, but of the those sent to “protect” it. Not in the installation of a more democratic government in Iraq, but in the growth of a more tyrannical one at home.

Photo: AP Images

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