
OBAMA'S IRAQ MOVES SHOW THAT HIS CRITICS WERE RIGHT

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President Obama, who once boasted of ending the Iraq War and then insisted the only alternative to no boots on the ground was deployment of hundreds of thousands of troops, still scrambles to match his critics recommendation for additional U.S. troops in the war against the Islamic State.

The Post reports:

Defense Secretary Ashton B. Carter said Monday that the Pentagon will deploy an additional 560 U.S. troops to Iraq, widening the U.S. military campaign against the Islamic State after Iraqi security forces seized a key airfield over the weekend.

Army Lt. Gen. Sean MacFarland, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said that the additional troops will predominantly be assigned to the newly recaptured air base, installing everything from additional security measures to communications gear. Qayyarah Air Base is considered an important springboard to take back the city of Mosul, which is the de facto capital of the Islamic State in Iraq and about 40 miles north of the airfield.

This is a poor substitute for a coherent plan to defeat the Islamic State. On the one hand, this incrementalism is disastrous, as it drags out the campaign, giving ISIS the opportunity to prepare, to conduct spoiling attacks, and to reposition to other theaters, military guru and frequent Obama critic Fred Kagan tells Right Turn. On the other hand, it may be necessary at this point given the extreme weakness of the [Prime Minister Haider al-]Abadi government and the risk of so badly compromising him vis-a-vis Iran that he is driven from power. He emphasizes that dribbles of troops are not a substitute for strategy, and certainly not a substitute for the intense political engagement in Baghdad that is actually required at this point both to help the Iraqis resolve their internal problems and to seek ways of strengthening Abadi.

With the latest move, the president □ who in 2011 refused to agree to a significant stay-behind force to secure the peace in Iraq □ now has sent 4,647 troops. Unofficially, that figure is probably closer to 6,000 when considering a variety of American troops who deploy on temporary assignments that the Pentagon does not include in its official tally, The Post reports. Meanwhile, the Islamic State has gone global, inspired a series of deadly attacks in the West and continued to

recruit thousands of fighters from the West.

Moreover, just as he once criticized President George W. Bush, Obama is not being forthright about the budget implications of an expanded force. Republicans insist that he match his expanded mission with adequate funding:

The chairmen of the House and Senate Armed Services committees on Monday both offered qualified support for the Obama administrations plan to send 560 more troops to Iraq as part of preparations to seize the city of Mosul from the Islamic State. They warned, however, that the president could not expect to conduct such operations without asking Congress to cut a new check.

These operations will not pay for themselves, Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said in a statement, arguing that the government cannot continue to ask our troops to do more around the world by raiding funds needed to modernize their equipment and support their training.

Former House Armed Services Committee spokesman and Jeb Bush adviser John Noonan tells Right Turn, The President deserves some credit for acknowledging reality and upping the ante. But between this new deployment and Afghanistan, he doesnt have enough coin to keep the missions going. He adds, If the White House is serious, theyll move on Congress supplemental funding request. After a spate of new global ISIS attacks, half measures are a luxury we cant afford.

It will fall to the next president and commander in chief to assess the military needs in the region required to extinguish the Islamic State (without handing Iraq over to Iran on a silver platter), convince our Arab allies that we are committed to victory and agree to military funding levels commensurate with the threat we face. How much easier her job would be had the president followed his critics advice all along, thereby preventing Iraq gains from slipping away and allowing Syria to become a bloodbath and the Islamic State to run amok.

Kaynak/Source: