

## Obama's IS Strategy, Decoded

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President Obama was being needlessly modest when he told reporters he had no strategy for dealing with the Islamic State.

Not true.

He does, in fact, have a strategy; it's just been buried under a pile of bloated, JV-league cliches.

After carefully reviewing his many statements on the topic over the past months, we've managed to piece the president's line of reasoning together into a more or less coherent statement.

To wit, with all the supporting quotes to back it up:

IS is no big deal since they're just one of many terror groups . . .

"I think it's important for us to recognize that ISIL is just one of a number of organizations that we have to stay focused on." — June 22

... and they're bush league to boot.

"The analogy we use around here sometimes, and I think is accurate, is if a JV team puts on Lakers uniforms, that doesn't make them Kobe Bryant." — Jan. 27

Besides, we just can't attack every two-bit group than hangs a terrorist shingle out.

"What we can't do is think that we're just going to play whack-a-mole and send U.S. troops occupying various countries wherever these organizations pop up." — June 22

Ha! Just kidding! IS is a threat to the region and to the U.S.

"We have an interest in making sure that a group like ISIL, which is a vicious organization and has been able to take advantage of the chaos in Syria, that they don't get a broader foothold." — Aug. 18

They are, in fact, a tumor in need of surgery ...

"Rooting out a cancer like ISIL will not be quick or easy, but I'm confident that we can — and we will." — Aug. 28

... and removal.

"Our objective is clear, and that is to degrade and destroy ISIL so that it's no longer a threat not just to Iraq, but also the region and to the United States." — Sept. 3

..  
So our plan is to, um, push back on them just a bit ...

"My priority at this point is to make sure that the gains that ISIL made in Iraq are rolled back." — Aug. 28

... and try to make IS a situation we can deal with.

"If we are joined by the international community, we can continue to shrink ISIL's sphere of influence, its effectiveness, its financing, its military capabilities to the point where it is a manageable problem." —Sep. 3

In any case, rest assured that we're doing as little as possible . . .

"I want to make sure everybody is clear on what we're doing now, because it is limited. Our focus right now is to protect American personnel on the ground in Iraq; to protect our embassy, to protect our consulates." — Aug. 28

. . . because there's no military solution to this terror threat . . .

"As I said when I authorized these operations, there is no American military solution to the larger crisis in Iraq."—Aug. 11

... even though our troops could kick the Islamic State's butt if we let them.

"Our military is the best in the world. We can route ISIL on the ground." — Aug. 28

Which we never will ...

"I've been very clear that we're not going to have U.S. combat troops in Iraq again. And we are going to maintain that." — Aug. 9

... because even if IS threatens America, it's up to Iraq to deal with it.

"The best and most effective response to a threat like ISIL will ultimately involve partnerships where local forces, like Iraqis, take the lead." — June 19

In the end, none of this matters, because IS is destined to die on its own.

"People like this ultimately fail. They fail, because the future is won by those who build and not destroy." — Aug. 20

So IS is, in fact, no big deal after all.

Sure, this isn't as pithy as "pay any price, bear any burden," or "tear down this wall."

But to say Obama hasn't thought his plan through to handle IS is a disservice to someone who historian Michael Beschloss has declared to be "probably the smartest guy ever to become president."

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