



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on August 16, 2016

In Foreign Policy Speech, Trump Condemns Nation Building and Calls for Defeat of Radical Islamic Terrorism

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump delivered a policy speech in Youngstown, Ohio, on August 15, in which he focused on immigration and terrorism, as well as foreign policy. Trump prefaced his speech by saying: “Today we begin a conversation about how to Make America Safe Again.”



Two headline-grabbing points that Trump made in his speech were his naming of “Radical Islamic Terrorism” as the most significant threat challenging the world (replacing Fascism, Nazism, and communism for that dubious distinction) and his statement: “If I become President, the era of nation-building will be ended.”

Trump drove home his point about the threat of Islamic terrorism at the start of his speech, by naming incidents where Islamic terrorists (or their sympathizers), including the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing; the 2015 shootings at two military installations in Chattanooga, Tennessee; last December’s mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino; and the shooting last June at the Pulse LGBTQ nightclub in Orlando.

The candidate then went on to name similar incidents that have occurred across Europe, including the January 2015 attack at the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and another attack in Paris two days later in a Jewish deli. He also named the November 2015 terrorist shootings in Paris that slaughtered 130 people, and noted that “France is suffering gravely, and the tourism industry is being massively affected in a most negative way.”

Trump continued by naming the March bombing in the Brussels airport, and the Bastille Day incident in Nice, France, where a Tunisian immigrant sympathetic to ISIS drove his truck into a crowd, killing 85 people; the incident a few weeks ago in Germany, when a refugee armed with an axe wounded five people on a train; and finally, the ISIS killer who invaded a church in Normandy France, forced an 85-year-old Catholic priest to his knees, and slit his throat before his congregation.

After summarizing the many incidents, both here and abroad, committed either by identified ISIS members or sympathizers or claimed by ISIS after the fact, Trump asserted: “The rise of ISIS is the direct result of policy decisions made by President Obama and Secretary Clinton.”

To prove his point, Trump asked his listeners to “look back at the Middle East at the very beginning of 2009, before the Obama-Clinton Administration took over” and listed the following observations:

Libya was stable.

Syria was under control.



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Egypt was ruled by a secular President and an ally of the United States.

Iraq was experiencing a reduction in violence.

The group that would become what we now call ISIS was close to being extinguished.

Iran was being choked off by economic sanctions.

Trump then asked his listeners to contrast the state of the Middle East and North Africa back in 2009 with conditions today:

Libya is in ruins, our ambassador and three other brave Americans are dead, and ISIS has gained a new base of operations.

Syria is in the midst of a disastrous civil war. ISIS controls large portions of territory. A refugee crisis now threatens Europe and the United States.

In Egypt, terrorists have gained a foothold in the Sinai desert, near the Suez Canal, one of the most essential waterways in the world.

Iraq is in chaos, and ISIS is on the loose.

ISIS has spread across the Middle East, and into the West.

Trump's conclusion:

In short, the Obama-Clinton foreign policy has unleashed ISIS, destabilized the Middle East, and put the nation of Iran — which chants “Death to America” — in a dominant position of regional power and, in fact, aspiring to be a dominant world power.

Among the policies that Trump blames for the rise of ISIS:

The failure to establish a new Status of Forces Agreement in Iraq, and the election-driven timetable for withdrawal, surrendered our gains in that country and led directly to the rise of ISIS.

The role of the Obama administration in helping to build ISIS to the level where it has become the world's most dangerous terrorist organization is not new to readers of *The New American*.

In multiple articles published by this magazine (e.g., “Anti-ISIS Coalition Built ISIS”; “ISIS: The Best Terror Threat U.S. Tax Money Can Buy”; “Obama's ‘Anti-ISIS’ Coalition Built ISIS, Biden Admits”; and “Obama Helped ISIS in Syria, Now Fights It in Iraq”) readers have learned, among many other things:

- “From sending weapons and providing training to the same jihadists in Syria who later crossed into Iraq, to tacitly endorsing the bankrolling of Islamic terror groups by supposed American allies, U.S. foreign policy has been critical in the emergence of the monstrously barbaric self-styled Islamic State ‘caliphate’ formerly known as ISIS.”
- “The Obama administration's ‘coalition’ partners in the supposed battle against the Islamic State (ISIS or ISIL) played a key role in building up the threat from the start.... The training and arms for jihadist rebels is being perpetrated under the guise of fighting ISIS — a threat Obama and his allies helped create.”
- “Indeed, without the U.S. government and Obama's ‘coalition’ of Sunni Islamist strongmen, the ‘Islamic State’ would probably not exist — much less have the resources, weapons, manpower, and training needed to seize enough territory to create a ‘Caliphate’ (Islamic Empire) of barbarism across large swaths of Iraq and Syria.”



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- “Everybody has heard of the group of barbarians styling themselves the Islamic State, or ISIS, or, ISIL, or whatever they’re calling themselves this week. These savages are still butchering their way through huge segments of Iraq and Syria with U.S. weapons. What fewer people know about is that this terrorist group is largely the Frankenstein creation of the Obama administration’s so-called ‘anti-ISIS’ coalition.”

While Trump recognizes the role that the Obama administration played in fueling ISIS’s rise to power, he is strangely silent about the administration of George W. Bush, which played a major role in destabilizing Iraq and creating the power vacuum that ISIS filled. That was not the case only six months ago, however. As we noted in an article last February, in which we noted that during a Republican candidates’ debate in Greenville, South Carolina, Trump [called the invasion of Iraq “a big fat mistake,”](#) and also responded to Jeb Bush’s defense of his brother’s record by reminding listeners that the 9/11 attacks had occurred while George W. was president.

During that debate, moderator John Dickerson asked Trump about an interview he’d had back in 2008 with Wolf Blitzer. During that interview, they had discussed Bush’s conduct of the war in Iraq. Dickerson reminded Trump of a statement he’d made to Blitzer: that he was surprised that Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi hadn’t tried to impeach him.

Trump had told Blitzer at the time: “Which, personally, I think would have been a wonderful thing.”

When Blitzer asked Trump what he had meant by that, Trump explained: “For the war, for the war, he lied, he got us into the war with lies.”

When Dickerson asked Trump if he still believes that Bush should have been impeached, Trump backed off a bit but still cast blame on Bush:

George Bush made a mistake. We can make mistakes. But that one was a beauty. We should have never been in Iraq. We have destabilized the Middle East.

A discussion of the effects of our invasion of Iraq and the interventionist foreign policy that has continued ever since came up during a the CNN Republican presidential town hall in Columbia, South Carolina, on February 18. During that town hall, the moderator, Anderson Cooper, introduced an attendee named Orrin Smith, who asked Trump if he still stood by a statement he made about five years ago asserting that Bush had lied to get us into war in Iraq, noting that the statement had stung him very deeply.

Trump sidestepped the question somewhat and without saying that Bush had definitely lied, replied:

Let me ... tell you something. I’ll tell you it very simply. It may have been the worst decision — going into Iraq may have been the worst decision anybody has made, any president has made in the history of this country. That’s how bad it is, OK?

Summing up his recitation of the bad effects of our Iraqi invasion, Trump correctly noted:

The war in Iraq started the whole destabilization of the Middle East. It started ISIS. It started Libya. It started Syria. That was one of the worst decisions ever made by any government at any time.

Trump may have had no problem criticizing the Bush role in destabilizing the Middle East and contributing to the rise of ISIS six months ago, but he is no longer making such statements. While it is true that he is running against Hillary Clinton and not a Bush, it may be that he prefers to focus his criticism on his current political opponent. However, given that neither of the former presidents Bush,



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nor Jeb Bush, has endorsed Trump for the presidency, he might be forgiven for ignoring what Ronald Reagan called “the Eleventh Commandment” during his 1966 campaign for governor of California: “Thou shalt not speak ill of any fellow Republican.”

Perhaps Trump is trying to build some party unity in a GOP that is badly fractured during this election year.

While Trump’s condemnations of Obama and Clinton for their role in creating policies that were beneficial to ISIS have much merit, it is also important to remember that the policies of George W. Bush were also very instrumental in providing fertile ground for ISIS to get established. The dictators Saddam Hussein and Bashar al Assad, if not destroyed and weakened by Western forces, would never have allowed ISIS to gain a foothold in their part of the world.

Trump was also highly critical of nation-building in his speech, saying:

Our current strategy of nation-building and regime change is a proven failure. We have created the vacuums that allow terrorists to grow and thrive.

However, as Trump admitted six months ago, Bush was just as guilty of nation-building as Obama has been. There is ample blame to go around.

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