

A Wartime President

All pretense ended Monday night, when President Barack Obama became Commander-in-Chief at a time of war. He has never been reluctant to kill terrorists with unmanned drones, but now the United States military is bombing ISIS targets inside Syria. The president has authorized strikes by fighter planes, bombers, and Tomahawk missiles, the same weapons brandished by President Bush a decade ago.

This is obviously not what Barack Obama envisioned when he called for a "fundamental transformation" of America, nor when he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize after less than a year in office. But at least Mr. Obama was realistic at that ceremony in Norway, saying military force can be "justified on humanitarian grounds."

This is one of those instances where even committed peaceniks can recognize the inhumanity of our foes. ISIS has managed to turn Jimmy Carter into a hawk, such is the wickedness of their goals and means. And, miracle of miracles, ISIS even united Congress, if only momentarily. Both the House and Senate passed a measure to arm and train Syrian rebels in their fight against ISIS.

So now what, with America once again lobbing missiles at targets in the Middle East? We should all hope that President Obama is treated with more deference and afforded more latitude than his predecessor. A decade ago, some far-left Democrats called for President Bush to be impeached or tried for war crimes, while loony websites ran wild with Bush-hatred. Many in the mainstream media echoed the anti-Bush derangement, albeit a bit more politely.

The media will be more compliant with President Obama, and the opposition party will also be wise to exercise some restraint. Republican Senator Mark Kirk of Illinois put it this way:

"Once Americans engage against the forces of evil, we should be pro-American." Even Rand Paul, the most fervent anti-war Republican in the Senate, said on Tuesday that he "supports military action against ISIS." Senator Paul simply wants the President to get the official imprimatur of Congress, not an unreasonable suggestion.

The truth remains that many Republicans loathe President Obama; the House has even voted to sue the President. More than a few independents, and even some Democrats, are also disenchanted. Mr. Obama oversaw a health care monstrosity, his administration has abused its power time and again, and his stewardship of the economy has been woefully inadequate. The President seems to care far more about "social justice" and "climate change" than securing our borders and protecting the homeland. But all those complaints, valid though they may be, are temporarily on the back burner.

It's also valid to criticize President Obama for waiting too long to confront ISIS; intelligence sources tell The Factor that the administration knew about the dire threat a year ago! President Obama now seems to believe that ISIS can be defeated without sending ground troops to Syria and Iraq. Military analysts disagree, almost unanimously. But whichever argument proves correct, we are now united in our desire for success.

Back in 1947, when a World War was over and a Cold War just beginning, Republican Senator Arthur Vandenberg famously declared that "partisan politics stops at the water's edge." Politicians from both parties have sometimes ignored that sage advice, most notoriously a decade ago when President Bush went to war in Iraq. But whatever mistakes were made in the past, Vandenberg's adage bears repeating. We are engaged in a war with a savage enemy, a war that must be won.