

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

September 5, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. President:

With each passing day, the threat from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) becomes increasingly more apparent and urgent.

The American people are rightly shocked and outraged by the barbaric executions of James Foley and Steven Sotloff. Unfortunately, these depraved acts represent neither the beginning nor the end of ISIL's atrocities against innocent individuals who oppose their evil ideology.

Already, ISIL has slaughtered thousands of innocent Christians and Muslims and attempted genocide of the Yazidis. They have systematically raped, enslaved, and murdered countless women. They are also recruiting and brainwashing child soldiers to participate in the torture and execution of their enemies.

ISIL's intentions are clear; they aim to control as much territory as possible to establish a breeding ground for their warped ideology and a base of operations from which they can spread it; use murder and fear to control the population, propaganda to attract foreign fighters and funding, and then obtain the money, manpower, and weapons necessary to plot and carry-out attacks against Europe and the U.S.

The American people and the world need to hear you outline our strategy to defeat ISIL in clear and unequivocal terms. They need to hear the truth about ISIL, the threat they represent, and the sacrifice and combined effort that will be needed to defeat them.

ISIL represents a clear and immediate threat to the national security of the United States, which is why you should use the constitutional and legal authority you possess as commander-in-chief to conduct attacks to degrade and defeat ISIL. Just as the U.S. has conducted operations against terrorists elsewhere, there is no legal reason preventing you from targeting ISIL in Syria. With U.S. leadership the United States should vigorously pursue an international coalition to increase military options against ISIL, including increased air support and lethal assistance to Iraqi and Kurdish forces as well as a more aggressive approach to destroy supply routes, vital infrastructure and ISIL leadership wherever they are operating. It is also important to increase support to moderate Syrian opposition forces currently fighting ISIL.

In addition to striking ISIL abroad, there must be a renewed and heightened effort to secure the homeland as well. With the disturbing increase in western fighters from Europe and the United States drawn to support ISIL, as well as ISIL's attempts to expand their territory, we must be vigilant in working with European and Middle Eastern partners to track the flow of ISIL fighters and prevent the return of jihadists to Europe or the U.S. This is a large challenge and one that will require considerable attention by the U.S. government and a broad coalition of allies, but it is paramount to U.S. national security.

Americans are understandably concerned about the idea of again sending American servicemen and women back to a region of the world that has already taken so much in American blood and treasure. With recent history fresh in their mind, it is even more imperative that you use the power of the Presidency to inform Congress and the American people about the unique and historic threat that ISIL presents to our country, our people, and our allies. If we fail to rise to this challenge, ISIL will grow into an even larger threat that future generations of Americans will be forced to confront under even graver circumstances.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Marco Rubio', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Marco Rubio
United States Senator