REAGAN AND ISIS

WWRRD? It's the question all Pub prez contenders need to ask and answer: What Would Ronald Reagan Do?

It's particularly apposite regarding ISIS, to contrast RR with his successor, President No Strategy. It's easy enough to criticize and ridicule Zero for being such a limp-wrist in confronting America's enemies. It's quite another to clearly state just how you'd go about neutralizing their threats.

The candidates to trust on this would be those who will say, "I'd do what Reagan would do, and here's what that is." So let's perform a thought-experiment.

We're in the Situation Room in the basement of the West Wing at the White House for a meeting of the National Security Council, chaired by President Ronald Reagan. Secretary of State John Bolton begins: "Mr. President, you've been fully briefed on the ISIS terrorist movement. What should our strategy be towards them?"

Reagan responds:

"John, most issues of foreign policy and national security are complex, as you well know, requiring negotiations, trade-offs of compromises, and the like. ISIS is not one of them. Our policy is simple: *We win, they lose*. And by 'lose,' I mean *totally*, far more thoroughly than how we won and the Soviets lost the Cold War. They must be physically destroyed.

"The 'capital' of ISIS is Raqqa in northern Syria. My predecessor made a number of 'surgical' airstrikes on ISIS targets in the city to no effect. I will now order a series of B-52 strikes to level the city making it uninhabitable. For 72 hours prior, I order that leaflets in Arabic be dropped on the city in profusion warning them to evacuate.

"Any 'collateral damage' resulting from our leveling Raqaa will be the responsibility of ISIS; any whining of the media to the contrary will be ignored. Our goal is that of Patton's: the quicker and more convincingly you win a war, the more lives are saved in total.

"The leaflets will also invite those ISIS fighters who survive our B-52s to meet us for *Malahim* in Dabiq. The name of the slick magazine ISIS publishes is named Dabiq because that's where they think the Islamic Armageddon or *Malahim* will be fought. Very well. Let's give it to them. I want the Kurdish Peshmerga armed to the teeth, given all the weapons they need. I want them with all the Marines and SpecOps the Pentagon says they need to be in Dabiq after we destroy Raqqa, and say to ISIS, 'come and get it.'

"Then I want SpecOps - SEALs, Delta, Marsoc - hunter-killer teams sent throughout eastern Syria and western Iraq to track down ISIS fighters and eliminate them. Keep doing it until there aren't

any more to eliminate.

"Yet we also must go their source, their sponsor. Every guerrilla movement needs a neighboring country willing to give them a sanctuary, providing them access to the outside world - especially one landlocked and surrounded by enemy neighbors: Baghdad, Riyadh, Amman, Damascus.

"The glaring exception providing sponsorship, support, sanctuary, plus physical and financial access to the world is Ankara. President Recip Erdogan and his government in Turkey make ISIS possible.

"So, John, I am instructing you to have our ambassador in Ankara inform President Erdogan personally that his support for ISIS will now end. He will shut the Turkey-Syria and Turkey-Iraq border down to any infiltration or exfiltration of ISIS people and supplies - or the Marines will. He will shut down all the banks and financial services in Turkey doing business with ISIS - or we will. This is not a negotiation, this is to inform him what we will do if he does not."

Bolton nods his head. "Understood, Mr. President. What about all the ISIS wannabes from Europe, Libya, and elsewhere trying to reach ISIS territory and join them?"

Reagan looks around the table. There are his Secretary of Defense, National Security Advisor, Director of Central Intelligence, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. He tells them:

"Gentlemen, the problem again is Turkey. All of these wannabes enter ISIS territory across Turkey's borders. I want you to implement a comprehensive plan to put an end to this with whatever assets you need, naval, covert whether at the border or Turkish ports of entry. Once it's confirmed they intend to join ISIS, they are to be forcibly seized and turned over to the Kurds. They'll know what to do with them."

The DCI suppresses a smile. "Once word gets out of their Kurdish fate, I think we'll be seeing fewer of them."

Reagan looks at the DCI thoughtfully. "There's something else I want you to do. I want you to instigate what I call an agitprop *of ridicule*. What the press called my 'Reagan Doctrine' against the Soviets focused on their most critical vulnerabilities, and one of ISIS' is their ideology demanding a return to the 7th century, to follow the exact words and deeds of Mohammed.

"ISIS' sister organization, Boko Haram in Nigeria, makes this explicit - for *boko haram* means 'Western education is forbidden.' That means *any* Western technology is forbidden. Mohammed didn't have electricity or cell phones or vehicles with internal combustion engines or gunpowder much less automatic weapons.

"They're all *haram*! If ISIS wants to go back to the 7th century, they have to start living in the 7th

century, living as Mohammed did, traveling only with camels or horses, and fighting only with swords and knives.

"Your people will have a field day planting stories all over the internet, social media, newspapers, media everywhere in the world making fun of ISIS as ridiculous hypocrites. Make fun of anyone admiring ISIS - they must choose to give up all Western technology in order to live the way ISIS demands. Have fun making fun of them."

After all the chuckles die down, the DCI says, "We certainly will, Mr. President."

The APNSA (National Security Advisor) asks, "Mr. President, ISIS is an actor on a wider Middle East stage including Syria, Iraq, and Iran. Any comments?"

Reagan answers, "The focus of this meeting is specifically regarding ISIS. We can get into the weeds quickly by discussing the problems of the entire region. So here are topics for future discussion:

"Syria. The main problem is Assad himself, his willingness to slaughter hundreds of thousands of his own people and create millions more as homeless refugees in order to keep his power. In rare cases of tragic necessity, the words of Stalin apply -- *net cheloveka*, *net problemy*, no person, no problem. They apply now to Assad.

"Iraq. It's not a real country. We're trying to square a circle in spending blood and treasure to keep it together. The map of the Middle East is obsolete, created out of the shards of the Ottoman Empire. We need to be thinking about how best to help reorganize it for the 21st century.

"Iran. We must do whatever it takes to deny nuclear weapons to the mullahs running Iran. We can work with the Israelis to sabotage their facilities, but the real and only sufficient solution is *regime change*. A serious program of support for insurgencies and protest movements among the Iranian Kurds, the Arab Awazis, the Azeris, Baluchi, Turcomen, and yes, the Persians themselves would collapse the government in Tehran quickly.

"This would all take place with the cooperation of our two main allies in the region, Israel, and the Al-Sisi government of Egypt."

Reagan glances at Bolton, who then announces, "Thank you all for attending. This meeting is now adjourned."

That's what Reagan would do with ISIS. Which of the Pub contenders will embrace it as their own?

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