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Baghdadi's Bunker: Five Essential Tasks for Which the World Should Now Prepare

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Baghdadi's Bunker: Five Essential Tasks for Which the World Should Now Prepare

By *Paul Kamolnick*

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Paul Kamolnick

The Islamic State Organization (ISO) will be defeated. That defeat will occur sooner rather than later. The nature of this terrorist organization suggests that preparations should now be made to minimize the carnage, loss of irreplaceable life, and cultural treasures that may without sufficient preparation accompany the final days and aftermath of ISO. In my opinion, existing strategy focused on counter-insurgent Lines of Effort (LOEs), should now be supplemented. The five following tasks are recommended as urgent and essential to the current policy of permanently defeating ISO.

- 1. Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).** ISO's willingness to kill in masse suggests that it will if capable unleash WMD. There is no concrete evidence that ISO possesses chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear materials on a mass scale, but evidence does exist that chemical weapons have been used, and that ISO is pursuing WMD capability. Every effort should be taken to ascertain ISO's present possession of WMD and immediate steps taken to prepare to intervene should their use be imminent.
- 2. Mass Murder and Genocide.** ISO is on record carrying out mass murder against a vast range of 'enemies,' including: Sunnis, Shi'a, Kurds, Christians, Yazidi, and all persons, no matter how militant, who are declared apostate for not pledging allegiance to ISO's self-proclaimed Caliph Ibrahim. ISO's intentions, language, and actions are clear in describing several categories of person as non-human and deserving extermination. ISO has imprisoned thousands of dissenters. Every effort should be taken to identify every ISO prison, incarceration facility, and potential means for carrying out the systematic mass murder and genocide of those it views as enemies of its self-defined mission. Though ISO has notoriously furnished the world with evidence of these atrocities, every effort should be taken to secure and protect essential evidence for a future war crimes trial, and to protect and sequester defectors and dissidents as potential witnesses whose testimony is invaluable.
- 3. Cultural Treasures of Ancient Near Eastern Civilization.** ISO has demonstrated that it views as idolatrous virtually every major artifact of the cultural history of the rise of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. Several irreplaceable treasures have been permanently destroyed or evacuated for financial gain into a black market for antiquities. Every effort should now be taken to prepare for ISO's industrial scale destruction of these monuments. Though no policing power presently exists within the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the unprecedented magnitude of ISO's likely destruction of world heritage recommends that a UN Security Council Resolution be passed providing for a security force deployed to protect as much as possible these irreplaceable monuments marking the birth and evolution of Near Eastern civilizations.
- 4. Rescue, Rehabilitation and Reintegration.** ISO's defeat will result in a bewildering and disorienting world for thousands of emigrants lured to its lands who will have watched their lives crumble. These former residents will require rehabilitation and reintegration. Every effort should now be made to prepare for the need to embark on this unprecedented task of facilitating the return, rehabilitation and reintegration of individuals and families whose lives will have been shattered by the end of a dream, living hell, or nightmare.
- 5. Reconciliation and Peace-Keeping.** Despite ISO's brutal, coercive, and vicious will to power, existing sectarian divisions have partially facilitated ISO's ability to clear, hold, build, and dominate in Sunni-majority lands. ISO's rule is based in poisoned sectarianism and it is highly likely that the collapse of ISO will leave in its wake the desire and likelihood of revenge attacks, mutual hatred, and divided communities and civil society. Every effort should now be

made to plan for an extended post-ISO peace-keeping phase to assist communities in the necessary task of attempting to restore some level of faith, trust, and belief in their neighbors.

ISO will be defeated sooner rather than later. We know its intentions, capabilities, and actions. We are in a position to prevent irreversible losses of human life and cultural treasure. Let us not react to the moment-to-moment horrors caused by this terrorist organization. We must be several steps ahead. We must ensure that WMD is accounted for and cannot be used; populations are rescued and do not get thrown into the inferno or gassed in secret prisons; cultural treasures are rescued from emplaced dynamite; persons and families are rescued, reoriented, rehabilitated, and reintegrated; and, communities have the space to attempt to build a lasting coexistence. This is doable. We must now plan. Let us do what we can and must to plan for a better peace. Baghdadi is in his bunker. His day is soon.

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About the Author



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Paul Kamolnick is professor of sociology at East Tennessee State University. He has published articles and reviews in *Perspectives on Terrorism*, *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism*, and *Small Wars Journal*. Kamolnick has also authored three monographs through the Strategic Studies Institute of the US Army War College, Carlisle, PA: *De-legitimizing Al-Qaeda: A Jihad-Realist Approach* (April 2012); *Countering Radicalization and Recruitment to Al-Qaeda: Fighting the War of Deeds* (June 2014); and, *The Al-Qaeda Organization (Tanzim Qa'idat al-Jihad) and the Islamic State Organization (Tanzim al-Dawla al-Islamiyya): History, Doctrine, Modus operandi, and United States Policy to Degrade and Defeat Terrorism in the Name of Sunni Islam (Ahl-us Sunnah)*. (Forthcoming, Spring/Summer 2016).

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