

SALVAGING WILSON: AN AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY IN FOURTEEN POINTS

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In a January 1918 address to a joint session of Congress, President Woodrow Wilson outlined fourteen principles he and other progressives and idealists hoped would end the Great War and create the “peace of the world” to follow. Among the most utopic items of these Fourteen Points, which earned Wilson the Nobel Peace Prize, were the elimination of secret diplomatic agreements, aggressive arms reduction, and the creation of an international security organization—the League of Nations—to which all future disputes likely to lead to war would be referred. Unsurprisingly, “Peace Without Victory,” the slogan that captured the propositions outlined in the 2500 words comprising Wilson’s prefatory remarks and Fourteen Points, became the rallying cry of Wilsonians.

Some of Wilson’s Fourteen Points, such as those promoting freedom of the seas, territorial restoration, and minority rights, found their way into the text of the Treaty of Versailles formally ending the Great War. Yet others met resistance. Britain and France, determined to have peace *with* victory, imposed harsh economic and military sanctions upon Germany, and Republicans in Congress rejected the League of Nations. Two years later, Wilson died a broken man, and a short generation later a conflict that, although called World War II, was really the resumption of hostilities fueled by abiding hatreds neither the Fourteen Points nor any aspirational document could paper over, embroiled the world in war again.

While tempting, to place the failure of the Fourteen Points solely upon Wilson’s professorial shoulders would be unfair. The immutable nature of mankind, and the *realpolitik* that expresses that nature, doomed the Fourteen Points from conception. Secret diplomacy, arms races, and the resort to war to settle political differences—features of international relations since time immemorial—remain very much with us. Still, the notion that international security architecture vaccinates against the disease of war demonstrates the naivete not only of the Nobel Committee but of Wilson and his intellectual descendants. The United Nations—offspring of the failed League of Nations—has in its finest moments served as little more than a multicultural talking shop and in its darkest hours devolved into an international fraternity rife with anti-Semitism, deliberate indifference to genocide, and a pledge to little more than affording sinecures to globalist elites who enjoy *hors d’oeuvres* and hobnobbing on the Hudson on American taxpayers’ dimes.

The obvious lesson of Wilson’s Fourteen Points is that no list of policy prescriptions is proof against the power of human nature or a guarantor against war. Yet at the remove of a century, the Fourteen Points may have salvage value, at least insofar as they establish precedent for the notion that a set of principles might elaborate the basis upon which to end a world war and ensure U.S. national security, and the security of the West.

The West is now, and has been since the 7th century, in a global war with barbaric adherents to an ideology that condones genocide, rape, terrorist attacks on women and children, and any and all means to impose its inimical religious, political, and legal domain upon the world. ISIS, now butchering, crucifying, raping, and enslaving its way through Iraq, Syria, Libya, and elsewhere, is but the most recent incarnation of the evil that is radical Islam, in regard to which the West has developed no effective response.

The following Fourteen Points, offered on the eve of Wilson's centennial and the Inauguration of President Trump, are inspired by the Wilsonian aspiration for a better world yet leavened with a realistic understanding of the darker dimensions of human nature, the importance of harnessing national interests in creating international security architecture, and the utility force offers under circumstances Americans believe "right and imperative," to quote Wilson. These Fourteen Points, drafted in response to radical Islam, are offered in the same spirit and with roughly the same brevity as Wilson's: namely, to "la[y] our whole thought and purpose before the world" with "utter simplicity and frankness[.]" having resort only to "sufficient definition to make...clear" our principles and purposes—those being to preserve our country and our civilization against an existential threat and, in the process, render the world amenable to "justice and ordered peace." To borrow from Wilson, "[O]ur program,...the only possible program,...is this[.]"

I. Define Our Vital Interests

The U.S. is a constitutional republic predicated upon natural legal protections for life, liberty, and property; free exchange of ideas and goods; capitalism; republican virtues; representative government; and Judaeo-Christian obligations. These values, principles, norms, and institutions alone comprise the set of vital interests Americans should use force to defend. We should neither be the guarantor of world peace nor a militant exponent of democratization. Although we can stand with like-minded nations in protecting common civilizational constituents under threat, we can neither afford, nor countenance, expansion of these vital interests. We must abstain from humanitarian intervention, nation-building, nonessential regime change, peace operations, and all military operations not driven by threats to these vital interests. Non-vital considerations must never motivate Americans to, in Wilson's words, "devote their lives, their honor, and everything they possess."

II. Restore the Concept of the Enemy

Americans once knew what to call an opponent bent on subjugating them, abolishing their way of life, and killing them: The Enemy. When Americans rallied to win independence from Great Britain, destroy Nazism and Japanese Imperialism, and roll back Communism, they identified and fought an enemy. Today, under the pernicious influence of pacifism, political correctness, and rank anti-Americanism animating academia, the media, and government, many Americans foolishly believe their foes are simply misguided, misunderstood, or motivated by a legitimate desire to right wrongs inflicted upon them by the U.S. By succumbing to "ostrich politics"—burying heads in the sand in the hope enemies will simply go away—Americans have gifted adversaries time and space to gather strength and advance their designs. We cannot indulge dangerous ideologies that nurture the pretense that our enemies are anything but. Rather, we must acknowledge, engage, and defeat enemies wherever they present, whether by declaration or conduct.

III. Acknowledge We Are at War

Radical Islam has proclaimed its intent to destroy Western civilization, and is attacking from Afghanistan to California and points in between. We are at war. Yet Americans, disinformed by academic, media, and government elites who counsel appeasement and brand as Islamophobic anyone who recognizes the existential danger, will not commit to battling an enemy their outgoing president will not even name. It is long past time to acknowledge, by formal declaration of Congress, that we are at war with radical Islam, and require the president to use all instruments of American power to destroy this enemy.

IV. Secure the Border

The U.S. has deliberately engineered undefended borders to provide cheap labor for Republican business interests and new voters for Democratic politicians. Predictably, radical Islamist fighters have insinuated themselves within our population, crossing from Mexico and infiltrating themselves within the U.S. Constructing physical and technological barriers to make the border proof against incursion by radical Islamists is imperative.

V. Eliminate the Internal Threat

The very mention of reducing, let alone restricting, Muslim immigration triggers denunciations of Islamophobia, and any suggestion that Muslim aliens should register to promote internal security during wartime meets with howls of outrage and references to Hitler. Yet nearly 400,000 of the three million U.S. Muslims believe Islamists should attack civilian targets in the U.S., while thousands quietly plan, train, and prepare such attacks. We must grant our intelligence and security agencies the tools to make individualized status determinations of the loyalty and dangerousness of adherents to a faith claimed by some as the ideological inspiration to jihad—holy war—against Americans. This is not necessarily a call to return to World War II-era policies of relocation and internment: those means least likely to impinge liberty while eliminating the internal threat are preferable, and technological innovations likely permit less restrictive measures. Regardless of opposition, we must identify and eliminate radical Islamists within our midst.

VI. Craft Layered Defenses

The U.S., subject to financial and political constraints, cannot be strong everywhere at all times, nor accept sole or even primary responsibility for global security. Without compromising our superpower status or isolating ourselves from the world, we must prioritize our interests and collaborate with like-minded nations. Premised on the carrier battle group doctrine, we must craft a layered defense in which the U.S. is conceptualized as the highest value asset to be protected at all costs (the aircraft carrier), our closest allies who contribute to our defense are conceived as pickets (cruisers and destroyers), and non-hostile states whom we value instrumentally and with whom we share common interests in battling radical Islam but with whom we do not maintain overt or close alliances are clandestine sources of early warnings and standoff defense (submarines).

VII. Fight Over There

In the war against radical Islam, we can fight the battle on enemy territory or on our soil. Fighting far from the U.S. will not only spare American civilian lives and property; waging

war where radical Islamists receive aid and comfort will pressure indigenous populations to internalize the costs of their support and consider whether, to protect their lives and cities from destruction, they should rise up, reject that evil ideology, and empower local governments that join with the U.S. in eradicating the scourge of radical Islam. If this war is to generate Dresdens and Hiroshimas, those shattered cities must be in enemy territory.

VIII. Engage in Anticipatory Self-Defense

Radical Islamists, for whom death in battle confers instant martyrdom, cannot be deterred. Each Islamist group that emerges, consolidates, or spins off from others intends to destroy us as soon as possible using the most powerful weapons it can acquire. In a world with no global sheriff, we must use military force against any radical Islamist group or nation, whether or not that group or nation has first employed force against us, to eliminate it before it grows in power, acquires weapons of mass destruction, and inflicts a first strike upon us. We must also engage in the vigorous diplomatic, legal, and intelligence-sharing campaigns that provide political support for our exercise of anticipatory self-defense.

IX. Trigger an Islamic Protestant Reformation

From the onset of the Protestant Reformation in 1524 until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, religion fueled warfare within Christendom. Throughout the 16th century, the Ottoman Empire waged war against Christian domains and expanded its reach and influence as the energies of European states turned inward in bloody battles to establish whether Catholicism or Protestantism achieved primacy. Ultimately, the West resolved to withdraw religion from international relations, at least as between Christian states, paving the way for the Enlightenment and the eventual transformation of religion from a matter of public concern to one of private conscience. The emergence of radical Islam, in stark contrast to the Islamic liberalism prevailing in Jordan, the UAE, Egypt, and elsewhere, is a crisis that presents the U.S. an opportunity to fuel the incipient protestant reformation currently sparking civil wars in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. By fomenting an Islamic Civil War and firmly backing Islamic protestants, the U.S. can turn Islamist energies inward, confine the fighting within the Islamic world, make Islamic allies shoulder most of the costs and burdens, and increase the likelihood that radical Islam will be delegitimized and defeated.

X. Create a New Collective Security Institution

The United Nations has failed spectacularly. A hundred wars since 1945 ended only through exhaustion of the parties or intervention of great powers; twenty rage even now. NATO, since 1991 the only effective international security organization, is not only populated largely by countries unwilling to do their fair share in the battle against radical Islam but simultaneously a threat to the one nation that is—Russia. A new collective security organization, motivated by shared interests in destroying radical Islam, promoting fair trade and rule of law, and defeating common security threats like terrorism and piracy, should replace NATO and be available when the UN fails. Membership should be open to states with a common appreciation of the radical Islamist threat that will use force to destroy it. Russia, Israel, the GCC, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Poland, and Croatia may well prove more reliable and effective partners against radical Islam than Germany, France, Spain, and other NATO members. Agreements as to rules, roles, force concepts, burden-sharing, and command structures that govern the new organization will mitigate anti-

Americanism arising from perceived U.S. unilateralism, eliminate free-riders, and reap a greater return on collective security expenditures in a time of constrained resources.

XI. Use Economical Force If and When Possible

The principle of economy of force directs the use of the least amount of military power necessary to accomplish a political objective so as to maximize benefits at the lowest costs in blood, treasure, and intangibles. To that end, invasion by a half-million ground troops to depose an enemy government, as undertaken in Iraq, is to be disfavored where regime change through coup, assassination, or other less costly means is available. Particularly when, as now, the U.S. faces the financial constraints of its national debt and competing priorities, economy of force looms large in the national security strategic calculus. Thus, while the entire spectrum of American military power, including thermonuclear weapons, should be available to U.S. leaders tasked with destroying radical Islam, instruments of tailored military power, to include weapons transfers to proxies, covert operations, drone strikes against senior leaders of Islamist organizations, support for coups and insurgencies, and other economical application of power should be employed.

XII. Wage Total War If and When Necessary

With our survival at stake, our leaders are morally obliged to use all instruments of national power. Ideally, we will capture the hearts and minds of Islamic peoples, shatter their will to fight for radical Islam, and render them willing to coexist. If this is impossible, our armed forces must utterly eradicate radical Islam and its adherents, and to that end must be allowed to fight with the ferocity needed to defeat Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan, even if great destruction, innumerable enemy casualties, and civilian collateral damage result. Because radical Islamists refuse to adhere to any rules in attacks on U.S. soldiers and civilians, their fighters should be stripped of the protections of the laws of war, made liable to attack by all means and methods at all places and times, and subject to judicial trial and execution post-interrogation. Crucially, U.S. leaders must defend their use of force, and the methods and means they countenance, as legitimate interpretations of the law of war necessary for our survival in an existential struggle against a lawless foe.

XIII. Explain Why We Fight

Since 9/11, Americans have expended blood and treasure in wars we failed to win. As radical Islam metastasizes into Iraq, Syria, North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Europe, it attracts recruits and spurs “lone wolf” attacks in the U.S. Meanwhile, Islamist propaganda is amplified by U.S. academic, media, and government elites whose false narratives have convinced many war-weary Americans that radical Islam is a mere irritant, our troops commit war crimes in fighting an illegal war against all Islam, and we must surrender to restore American morality and security. As their own government releases terrorists from Guantanamo, gives Iran \$150 billion and a clear path to nuclear weapons, brands Russian attacks on ISIS “war crimes,” and admits unvetted Muslims from war zones into their country, war-weary Americans wondering who their enemy is and why we fight are branded “Islamophobes” for demanding answers to these crucial questions.

Americans’ political will is eroding. To win a war the U.S. is losing, we must develop a

strategic messaging campaign modeled after the 1940s federally-commissioned, Hollywood-produced documentary series “Why We Fight,” which countered Axis propaganda, explained the evil war aims of Germany and Japan, and reassured Americans of the justice of their cause. Contemporary Americans are equally entitled to know their enemy, appreciate the existential threat radical Islam poses, and understand that the methods and means they must use to defeat this foe are just and necessary.

XIV. Decide to Win

We must recognize radical Islam as the apotheosis of evil. We must restore our belief in the goodness of our country and the justice of our cause. We must know that we fight for all humanity. We must reawaken the social cohesion and civic courage that won World War II. We must marshal all our resources and fight without restraints that impede our victory over an enemy intent on destroying our way of life. Above all, we must decide to win.