

Mr. President, You Have Misjudged the Nature of Our Enemies

President Obama's reaction to the brutal televised murder of American journalist Jim Foley was heartfelt, to be sure, but it missed the mark. The president deplored such barbarous acts and called them out of place in "the 21st century."

That begs the question: whose 21st century?

President Obama promised Hope and Change in 2009. He started off with his first foreign summit, in London, early that year.

He actually bowed to King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia. That was certainly change. No president of the United States had ever bowed to anyone before. When John F. Kennedy met with the newly elevated Pope Paul VI in the Vatican in 1963, our first Catholic president made a point of not kneeling to the Pontiff. So great was JFK's respect for the history and traditions of the U.S. presidency that he spoke respectfully to the pope, but remembered his own role.

In King Abdullah's kingdom, people who convert to Christianity are beheaded and their headless bodies are then crucified. Saudi Arabia has one of the worst human-rights records in the world. Simply put, when our State Department has to report on religious freedom, its section on Saudi Arabia can be brief: There is no religious freedom in Saudi Arabia. And there, the Calendar states clearly, the Year is 1435 A.H. (That's in recognition of the Hijri, or Muslim calendar, which dates from the Hegirah.)

So, when speaking respectfully to Muslims, calling this the 21st century is wholly out of place. For them it is the 15th century.

President Obama went on early in his administration to address the Turkish Parliament. He assured these Islamist lawmakers of America's great respect for their traditions.

For decades, modern Turkey was considered a bulwark against atheist communism and a trusted member of the NATO alliance. But too many of those Turkish parliamentarians whom Mr. Obama addressed at the outset of his presidency are moving that important country away from its 20th century orientation and back to its Islamist roots.

The young president continued his "apology tour" in 2009 when he addressed the students and faculty at Egypt's Al Azhar University. This choice was troubling because that university is a hotbed of Muslim Brotherhood activity. The Muslim Brotherhood has spawned terrorist movements all across the Middle East. Nonetheless, Mr. Obama assured his listeners of the U.S.'s goodwill. In short order, Egypt's long-term ruler, the pro-Western Hosni Mubarak, was overthrown and replaced by a Muslim Brotherhood front man—Mohamed Morsi. Morsi had been educated in the U.S., but his highest priority, he said repeatedly, was to gain the release of the murderous "Blind Sheikh." This is an Egyptian Islamist who had planned the first attack on the World Trade Center.

The saying in the Mideast is that you don't have to drink the sea to know it is salty. This should have been enough for the Obama administration to cut off U.S. aid to Morsi's increasingly radical and chaotic regime in Cairo. But it wasn't. President Obama continued to generously shovel U.S. millions to Egypt until Morsi was overthrown by his own generals. Only then, citing our disapproval of military revolts, did this administration cut aid.

TV's Barbara Walters sighs her regrets about the Obama administration. "We thought he was going to be the messiah," says this veteran newswoman. How far the mighty have fallen. In 2009, *Newsweek* editor Evan Thomas gushed that "President

Obama hovers over the nations like a sort of god.” Influential blogger Andrew Sullivan had assured everyone that an angry young Muslim in Pakistan had only to see Barack Hussein Obama’s handsome visage on TV and he would be pacified.

Now, with ISIS’s explosive growth, we see the Obama administration’s spokespersons raising alarms about this grave new threat to world peace. Mr. Obama had dismissed this outfit as recently as last January. He called them “junior varsity” in the terrorism league. But that was then.

What President Obama is saying with his unfortunate talk of “21st century” values is that he does not see the situation clearly. He has misjudged the nature of our enemies from the beginning of his administration. Now, his doves are coming home to roost.

President Reagan was both a visionary and a realist. He welcomed the moves toward openness (glasnost) and democracy (perestroika) that his policies of “Peace through Strength” had helped to bring about in the old USSR. He encouraged our Russian rivals to move beyond bitterness and conflict. Still, Reagan said “Trust but verify.” And he added: “Don’t be afraid to see what you see.”

President Obama’s wishful, wistful foreign policy has been based on a blurred and blinkered vision of foreign policy from the start. It would certainly be nice if we could—as the late Rodney King implored—“all get along.” But if we can’t, we’d better be prepared to meet any threat. No one has done more to let down our guard than President Obama.

Ken Blackwell is senior fellow, Family Empowerment, and **Bob Morrison** is senior fellow for Policy Studies at Family Research Council. This article appeared in *The American Thinker* on Thursday.