

Is the Islamic State a Threat to Civilization?

Southern Evangelical Seminary President Richard Land wrote last week that the radical and powerful formation of an Islamic State in Iraq and Syria has worldwide implications similar to the threat of Soviet Communism.

“In June, this emerging terrorist force declared a caliphate and began referring to itself as IS (The Islamic State), which more accurately signals its global ambitions to establish a universal worldwide caliphate, imposing by brute force its extremely harsh understanding of Sharia law on the entire world,” Land wrote.

“This is what makes IS such a grave threat to the civilized world. The closest analogy to IS in modern history is the . (the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), which was dedicated to imposing communism worldwide, heedless of national boundaries. It was an existential threat to all nations and peoples who wanted to decide for themselves how they would be governed, rather than have a particular ideology imposed on them by brute force. And make no mistake, neither Soviet Communism nor IS had, or has, a remote interest in democracy or elections.”

Land added that with the rise of communism, adherents from all over the world were willing to subvert their own national governments to support this worldwide cause. The same will be true for the Islamic State, “when people from across the globe flock to join IS as it seeks to impose its vision of Islam over the entire world, including planting its black flag over the White House.”

So what does this mean for people living thousands of miles from the turmoil?

"All freedom-loving people have a stake in this struggle as all did in the struggle against Soviet Communism," Land wrote. "Whether the totalitarian dictatorship is imposed by atheistic communists or radical jihadists, the result is the same—loss of freedom imposed with savage barbarity.

"[Putin] is a Russian imperialist seeking to channel the spirit of Peter the Great, attempting to establish a regional Russian hegemon over what he perceives to be 'greater Russia' and the 'near-abroad.' He does not harbor dreams, or articulate a universal ideology, which would lead to world conquest. Likewise, China dreams of being the world's number one economic power with a regional hegemon over all of Asia, not world conquest."

However, Land added, IS wants to conquer the world, making it a much graver civilizational threat than Vladimir Putin's Russia or the totalitarian rulers of China.

"We are witnessing the birth pangs of a worldwide revolution," he continued, "and IS's similarities to Lenin, Stalin and the Bolsheviks are both instructive and alarming. The free world desperately needs a new President Harry S Truman and Secretary [of State] George Marshall to emerge among Western leaders, to lead a worldwide diplomatic, cultural, economic and military alliance to defeat this lethal threat. And the time is now.

"The civilized world must confront and defeat this barbaric cancer before it metastasizes like Soviet communism, bringing with it horrific human suffering on a heart-breaking and breathtaking scale."