

And No Birds in the Obama Administration Sing the Right Song

To say that Ezra Pound is not the favorite poet of rational people is a striking understatement. Pound, fascist and anti-Semite, broadcast anti-American messages on the radio in Rome during World War II and was consequently indicted for treason and imprisoned for thirteen years. Nevertheless, some of Pound's words in "The Cantos" cast light on the dismal foreign policy of President Barack Obama and his administration.

Pound wrote, "to have done instead of not doing, this is not vanity... error is all in the not done, all in the diffidence that faltered." Pound could not have imagined that the actions of Obama over the last seven years, and the tone and substance of the president's prime time speech from the Oval Office on December 6, 2015, would exemplify his poetic words.

Obama, in unemotional and in seemingly detached manner, somewhat humdrum and lacking in urgency, spoke correctly of the need for airstrikes on ISIS and a coalition of countries to fight it. But much more important in his speech is what he mentioned is to be "not done." Among these non-actions, almost all referring to straw proposals supposedly made by political opponents, are the following. There will be no generation of American forces to go overseas to fight and die for another decade on foreign soil. We cannot let the fight be defined as a war between America and Islam. It is the responsibility of Americans to reject discrimination, and to reject religious tests on who to admit into the United States. Americans must reject proposals that Muslim Americans should somehow be treated differently. Doing this last act would be a kind of divisiveness, a betrayal of American values that play into the hands of groups like ISIL (Obama refers to the Islamic State

or ISIS in this way).

One can start with a fundamental question. What can explain the “not done” in Obama’s failing to understand or to act decisively against Islamist terrorism by ISIS, al-Qaeda, and groups threatening the U.S? Obama is assumed to have intellectual capacities and be a man of ideas, but he remains fixed to a limited view of the world in spite of changing circumstances, and seemingly incapable of responding to the multiple problems. Only a psychiatrist could speak on whether the essence of his beliefs or ideology is so ingrained he cannot perceive the reality of political or ideological differences.

It is unnerving that the Obama administration was so eager to deny or to discount the fact that the San Bernardino, California killers were linked to or were disciples of the terrorist ISIS, or even be concerned with the possibility that they might be part of a wider conspiracy in the U.S., a possibility to be taken seriously because of the number of jihadists who left the U.S. to fight for ISIS and have returned.

Obama’s associates seem similarly blind to the reality. Witness the astonishing remark of Attorney General Loretta Lynch on December 6, 2015. Referring to the San Bernardino massacre of December 2, 2015, she was “not sure” what ideology drove the two killers. Yet, the FBI immediately investigating what it addressed as an “act of terror” had made known the vital facts about the two perpetrators.

The 29-year-old Tashfeen Malik had praised the leader of ISIS, the Caliph Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in a Facebook post on the very day she and her husband murdered 14 innocent people. She had lived for a time in Saudi Arabia, and had attended an Islamic religious seminary (madrassa), in Multan, Pakistan, where she lived from 2007-2014. While there she became more religious and embraced an extremist version of Islam.

Attorney General Lynch might have remembered that similar Pakistani seminaries had graduated high profile, college educated individuals such as Faisal Shahzad, the Times Square bomber, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, mastermind of 9/11, and Aafia Siddiqui, neuroscientist who attacked U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan.

Malik's husband the 28-year-old Syed Rizwan Farook was, according to his father, a devoted believer in ISIS ideology. Together with his wife he amassed an armory of pipe bombs, semi-automatic weapons, and 6,000 rounds of ammunition. What is it that made Lynch "not sure?"

The personality of Obama, his mindset, and his persistence in living in a fantasy world where meaningful words may not be uttered, have become impossible to penetrate. Why is he so reluctant to talk about "terrorism," let alone Islamist terrorism, the greatest threat to the world which he has never mentioned? Why does he not recognize that jihad is an integral part of Islam and must be opposed? Why does he continue to lecture Americans on their shortcomings?

In practical terms, an excuse for his caution and limited U.S. action is based on the present of a coalition he believes he has created. But so far, the "coalition" is akin to a fantasy, limited to the UK, now striking against ISIS in Syria as well as Iraq, French strikes against ISIS, and deployment of its only aircraft carrier, the *Charles de Gaulle*, to the eastern Mediterranean, and the promise of a German contingents of 1,200 troops.

Above all, Obama refuses to recognize that he is now a wartime president. No one suggests he should mount a soapbox to proclaim this fact, or that like Teddy Roosevelt he should rush up the equivalents of San Juan Hill. But his indecisiveness must end. No one suggests the U.S. being drawn into a long and costly war in Iraq or Syria. Nevertheless, the U.S. will only be safe and prevail if it confronts the enemy,

clearly spells out who or what it is. Fighting ISIS and other terrorist groups prepared to attack Americans is not declaring war on a religion, but it is declaring war on the threat to civilization.

First published in the