



**Governor John Kasich's Remarks at the National Press Club, Washington, DC  
November 17, 2015**

Last Friday in Paris it was made obvious to the world yet again that there is an enormous chasm between the worldview of civilized people and the worldview of those who committed these acts of horror.

We believe that life has value and meaning. They see no value even in their own lives, let alone others.

We believe that different views and ideas should be respected, and these make us stronger. They believe the answer to disagreement is death.

We believe men and women are equal. They believe women are property.

We live in the light of God's love for all creation. They pervert and hijack one of the world's principal religions.

We live in the modern world, a world of free expression, a world of science, of respect for individual rights and liberties. They live in a darkness devoid of even the basic understanding of humanity.

We forget these differences—it's at our peril. Unless we want to see the bloodshed of Paris visited here in America and in the streets of our allies' capitals, we need to get serious, immediately, about dealing with this threat.

There can be no negotiating and no delay with this darkness. We must simply defeat it.

We cannot wait on a resolution to the Syrian crisis to begin dealing with ISIS. I am not convinced that the agreement achieved in Vienna several days ago on the future of Syria will be implemented on the announced schedule—or, frankly, any schedule. And I doubt it will lead to any certainty over Syria's future leadership. A ceasefire is supposed to occur within six months and elections within 18, paving the way for a potential political transition in Syria. I believe these are empty promises.

What is more, with ISIS having directly threatened the U.S. homeland, we cannot afford to wait.

We must act now.

We must invoke Article 5, the mutual defense clause of the North American Treaty, and bring NATO together to assist our ally France in its defense. I agree with President Hollande that Friday's attacks were an act of war by ISIS on France, and therefore they were an attack on America and every other NATO member state. NATO came to our aid after 9/11. NATO must now do so again for France. We must be swift, we must be decisive, and we must be absolute.

We must intensify international intelligence cooperation by identifying, exchanging information on, tracking and – if necessary – arresting the thousands of foreign volunteers currently fighting with ISIS who then later return to their home countries.

End-to-end communications encryption technology is increasingly leaving our intelligence agencies in the dark. We must develop new Signals Intelligence methods to

illuminate these targets technologically. And of course we must also invest more in Human Intelligence assets with which to penetrate and neutralize these terrorists groups. Our Signals Intelligence and Human Intelligence—they do not exist separate from one another. They accent and compliment one another, and every effort should be made to leverage each for the other's benefit.

We also need to reassess our domestic counterterrorism resources to ensure that our Joint FBI-CIA Counterterrorism Task Forces have the personnel they need to track potential domestic terrorists.

We must provide far more support to the Kurds – both in Syria and Iraq. The Kurds, who are fighting to defend their homeland, fight like tigers, and they are one of the few groups friendly to the United States who really have shown that they know how to take the fight to ISIS. We must arm them much more—much more generously than we have done so far.

Turkey has legitimate concerns about arming the Kurdish YPK in Syria. We must work to address their concerns as we insist on addressing a threat to the vital national interests of America and the rest of the world.

We must create safe havens protected by no-fly zones. I first called for no-fly zones early last month in order to relieve the suffering of Syrian refugees and reduce their need to travel to Europe. These sanctuaries should be located on the Turkish and on the Jordanian borders. Our Jordanian and Kurdish allies should provide protection for them on the ground while the United States provides protection from the air.

We must arrest human traffickers, prosecute them, put them in jail, and confiscate their ill-gotten gains.

We must create an international coalition to defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq. We must join with our NATO allies and, importantly, with allies in the region as well—that would be the Turks, the Jordanians, the Egyptians, the Gulf States, the Saudis—to organize an international coalition to defeat ISIS on the ground in its heartland. Experience, of course, has shown that an air campaign on its own is not enough.

We must be more forceful in the battle of ideas. U.S. Public Diplomacy and International Broadcasting have lost their focus on the case for Western values and ideals and effectively countering our opponents' propaganda and disinformation. I will consolidate them into a new agency that has a clear mandate to promote the core Judeo-Christian Western values that we and our friends and allies share: the values of human rights, the values of democracy, freedom of speech, freedom of religion, and freedom of association. And it should focus on four critical targets: the Middle East, China, Iran, and Russia.

Sophisticated strategies will be developed to communicate with each of these hard target countries.

The challenge posed by ISIS in Syria and Iraq is a symptom of a broader weakness in America's national security policy: failing to advance our values in the battle of ideas. Not doing so against a threat such as ISIS, or in places such as Syria and Iraq, is interpreted by other opponents around the world as weakness. The Administration's desire for an Iran nuclear deal at any cost is another example. And weakness invites

challenge and attacks of the kind that we have seen from nations that do not share our values, such as China and Russia.

By invading Georgia, annexing Crimea, fomenting a murderous proxy war in Eastern Ukraine, mounting provocative patrols, and building out its base structure in both Kaliningrad and Belarus, Russia has once again become a threat to European security.

Russia's leadership today does not respect the basic tenets of the international order, namely territorial integrity and the rule of law. Those are basic values of international relations, and Russia's failure to respect them is simply not compatible with constructive relations with the West.

We must work together with our European allies to defend a Free Ukraine. That includes training and arming Ukrainian forces with the weapons that they have asked for and which Congress has already approved.

It also means focusing on the defense of new NATO member states on the front lines with Russia, such as Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia.

NATO must be vigilant and protective of its eastern-most member states who live every day in Russia's shadow.

We must focus on supplying and equipping them and achieving inter-operability, jointly committing to higher defense spending targets, repositioning existing U.S. forces in Europe onto their eastern borders, increasing cooperation with Finland and Sweden, and building a new, strong integrated air defense system on NATO's eastern border.

We must also learn the lessons of Crimea and develop and exercise contingency plans for dealing with future Russian provocations.

You know, there are no such things as little green men or volunteers. Any such combatants will be treated as what they are: an attacking Russian army.

If they reappear, I will take U.S. forces in Europe and around the world to heightened combat readiness, in order to be able to intervene in support of our friends and our allies.

While Russia's actions are forcing us to take tough measures to achieve peace through strength and safeguard our friends and our allies, I will make it clear that the door to negotiations remains open.

I am confident that by sitting and talking together with our allies, Russia and America, that we can forge a new European security architecture that accommodates their interests without damaging those of NATO member states.

The same is true for our relationship with China. The weakness we have shown toward Russia is really no different than that we have shown towards China.

Its efforts to control the South China Sea and seabed resources to which it is not entitled are blatant violations of international rules and norms.

These are bold-faced efforts to do nothing more than bully its neighbors. Because of those efforts we must now stand by our Western Pacific allies who rightfully feel threatened by China's belligerence.

That means working with our regional allies to significantly increase our military presence in the region to ensure freedom of navigation for the \$5.3 trillion in annual trade that passes through the Western Pacific. We must forward deploy our Pacific combat commander to Guam, and stationing additional Air Force and Marines Corps units in the Western Pacific. We should increase joint Western Pacific freedom-of-navigation and submarine patrols. We should conduct regular regional amphibious landing exercises. We should help our Japanese allies defend their territorial waters by installing seabed acoustic sensor systems, anti-ship missiles, rocket-launched torpedoes, and mine-laying equipment throughout their southern island chain.

To deal with the nuclear threat posed by North Korea, I will work with South Korea and our other regional allies to revitalize allies' counter-proliferation activities and to build ballistic missile defenses.

The U.S. does not seek confrontation with China. We should remain open to working responsibly with our allies and with China as an equal stakeholder. Together, we should be able to forge innovative solutions and institutions that respect and accommodate the national security interests of all Pacific powers.

The same mistakes in judgment and strategy that have let terrorism flourish in recent years and wrongly signaled weakness to Russia and China are found throughout American national security policy right now, and it all comes down to this: we have not led.

Because leadership has not been a priority, we have been content to let the tools of leadership—our military and our alliance relations—grow weak and frayed. We have even hesitated to express and live by the values at the core of who we are. It's time for a change before it's too late.

We must rebuild our nation's sorely neglected military from the bottom up. This doesn't mean that, like some, we rush to fund every general's wish list. Instead, we must assess our combined allied capabilities and identify the needs and the gaps in dealing with threats that we face in each region of the world. This means being strategic about rebuilding our military: matching it to the threats that we face and complementing the capabilities of our allies.

We must also be more careful in how we spend our military dollars, especially on weapons systems. We can make our dollars go further and get our troops the equipment they need faster by rewarding on-target cost estimates, insisting on extensive prototyping, incentivizing contractors and program managers to be ahead of schedule and under budget, using off-the-shelf technology as much as we can, and putting in place high threshold criteria for design changes.

Likewise, we must ensure that scarce resources reach those who need them most—and those would be our fighting men and women—by streamlining the Pentagon bureaucracy, defining performance standards and holding our defense civilian workforce to them, providing greater flexibility both to hire the talent we need and part company with consistent under-performers.

And we must recognize that cyberspace is a battlefield as well that demands our attention and resources. This has not been the federal government's strength, and we

must not shy away from turning to the private sector for much-needed help to protect ourselves and to take the battle to the enemy.

We can and we must take out the resources that our enemies use to wage war online. Not only do we need strong, decisive, multilateral agreements to respond to anyone that attacks our governments and our private sector—and our allies, but we need an aggressive strategy to go after the cyber resources of our enemies. Not only does this eliminate threats, but of course it also deters future attacks. We have let ourselves fall too far behind in this area.

Rebuilding our military is no easy task. We know it'll be expensive, and it cannot be done without first making sure that we have a strong economy. No one understood this as well as President Ronald Reagan. I have proposed an economic revival plan that will provide the growth we need to be strong—strong economically but also strong militarily. Importantly, we need to balance our budget, and we need to stop adding to our national debt. What leverage do we have in dealing with other nations if they are the ones loaning us money for our out-of-control spending?

Relationships with our allies are critical to all we must do going forward. Friends like those in Europe have been ignored. Friends like Israel have been abused. We need to repair the damage. There is strength in numbers, strength in consensus, and by acting in concert with our allies, by sharing intelligence, by working together in international bodies, we can more effectively advance our interests and we can keep Americans safe.

As we rebuild our military we should consult with our allies to assess their military needs and their strengths. And of course we also should expect them to pull their weight.

And nothing about being an ally means you will not advance your own interests. An exclusive diet of going it alone: that's unsustainable. But America must always reserve the right to take its own actions and lead.

Our allied relationships are rooted in shared values, such as respect for human life; freedom of thought, expression, and religion; equality; and the right of every person—every person—to have a chance to learn, grow, and achieve.

These are handed down to us by our Judeo-Christian tradition, which has guided our civilization for centuries. Yet it is fair to say that at times we seem to have forgotten them, or have become afraid to stand up and proclaim them. If we don't know what we believe, how do we know what we want from life? How do we set goals for our families or communities or our nations?

If we let ourselves begin to drift, so afraid to offend anyone that we're afraid even to say what we think is right, we put our futures in peril. In this vacuum of values, is it any wonder that we see bright, educated young people abandoning the West for the meaning they think they see in the extremists' cause? Values are a compass that can help us individually and as a society navigate personal challenges in an increasingly complex and dangerous world. We need to rediscover them. We need to recommit ourselves to them with passion and without apology.

You know, this is not our battle alone. We should join with those moderate Muslims who have condemned the attack on Paris and who see through the lie of extremism. We

must encourage them and join with them to speak with one voice so that the world's young people understand what is a lie, what is true, what is darkness, and what is light—and life.

Finally, a word about how I see America's role in the world. There seems to be a fear today to call America exceptional. I believe America is exceptional. It is simply a statement of the obvious. We are exceptional because of our uniqueness. America is not a language or ethnic group or religion. We are the melting pot of every people in the world. So when Paris hurts, we hurt. When Ukraine hurts, we hurt. And, conversely, when those places hurt and we don't act—the world is weaker, and so are we.

Throughout all of our history, America has never been afraid to fight for our values and ideas. Oh yeah, it's okay that sometimes we argue. That's just part of it. You know, the fact that we have disagreements is part of how we live. But at each moment of crisis we have united as a nation. At each moment we came together in common cause. At each moment we united the civilized world. And of course we came out stronger because of it.

This is that moment. It's not someone else's job, nor is it our job alone. It is in the hands of each of us and our allies to realize that we can change the world. We can fix this. We can make America and the world a safer place to ensure that children and grandchildren can live to fulfill their dreams and ours. Thank you.

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