



Fox News: Obama briefed for more than a year on ISIS as serious threat

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Did Barack Obama really get surprised by the rise of ISIS and its capabilities to fight militarily — or did he just ignore the threat? Fox News' Catherine Herridge reports that a former Pentagon official says [the Presidential Daily Briefing has included warnings about ISIS for more than a year](#), long before Obama dismissed them as "jayvees." In this case, the source insists, the intelligence on ISIS' capabilities and potential was "exquisite":

A former Pentagon official confirms to Fox News that detailed and specific intelligence about the rise of ISIS was included in the PDB, or the President's Daily Brief, for at least a year before the group took large swaths of territory beginning in June.

The official, who asked not to be identified because the PDB is considered the most authoritative, classified intelligence community product providing the President with analysis of sensitive international events, said the data was strong, and "granular" in detail, adding a policy maker "...could not come away with any other impression: This is getting bad."

The official who has close knowledge of the process said the President, who reads the PDB unlike his predecessors who traditionally had the document briefed to them, was not known to come back to the intelligence community with further questions or "taskings." Asked to describe the frequency, the former Pentagon official said "not generally."

After suggestions that the administration may have been blindsided by the rise of ISIS, and that poor intelligence was to blame, the former Pentagon official said some of the intelligence was so good it was described as "exquisite" when the President drew a red line on chemical weapons use in Syria in 2012.

Contrary to recent comments, the Pentagon official says that Obama was offered strategic opportunities to attack ISIS targets on a broad scale, but that Obama didn't respond to them:

The source who is familiar with the deliberations said "(we) were ready to fire, on a moments notice, on a couple hundred targets," but no order was given. In some cases, targets were tracked for a "long period of time" but then slipped away.

If confirmed, this would put a serious dent in the White House spin that ISIS became a threat only because of an unexpected collapse in the Iraqi military. The question will be how anyone will get confirmation of this story. Unless other officials involved in the PDB process step forward — which seems unlikely, unless they no longer are part of that effort like this source — we may not see much confirmation of this for a couple of more years. Of course, Congress could call for an investigation into the intelligence and leadership failures that allowed ISIS to metastasize, but they already have a few of these kinds of probes in progress, and the cooperation level from

the White House has been low, to say the least, even when it concerns the murder of an American ambassador in Benghazi.

This revelation feeds into a developing narrative of incompetence and disengagement, which [Ron Fournier argued](#) even before this revelation will have our allies worried about Obama and our fade from the tough work of global security:

The truth of the matter is that Americans have always noticed how messy the world can be. Somebody needs to tell Obama there was media before social media.

What's unique about our times is the nature of the threats—suicidal, homicidal, genocidal terrorists, well armed and organized, seeking the destruction of the United States. The other difference: the lack of Western leadership, starting with the president himself. ...

You could almost hear the eyes rolling in his Cabinet, not to mention in European capitals, where potential partners are gathering this week in a crisis-packed summit with Obama. In The Washington Post on Monday, veteran reporters [Karen DeYoung and Dan Balz wrote](#) that allies are “waiting to see whether Obama has the capacity to chart a clear, decisive course.”

Americans are waiting, too. Instead of clarity, we get condescending lectures, like the one Obama gave rich supporters about a messy world and social media.

Rather than decisiveness, the White House stalls with defensive spin, such as this gem from senior adviser Dan Pfeiffer: “There’s no timetable for solving these problems that’s going to meet the cable-news cycle.” As if the enemy is CNN, and not ISIS, which has proven to be more nimble and quick than Obama.

The White House public relations staff must think Americans are pretty dumb. How else do you explain the way chief spokeswoman Jennifer Palmieri defended Obama for playing golf immediately after an address about the slaughter of journalist James Foley? “His concern for the Foleys and Jim,” Palmieri said, “was evident to all who saw and heard his statement.” Yes, just as evident as what else the world saw that day: the president’s golf cart, his golf clothes, and his wide, sporty smile.

That brings us to the “no strategy” gaffe, which was Kinsleyan in its revelation of the truth of Obama’s disengagement. Joe Scarborough asks former Obama press secretary Robert Gibbs whether the briefing room comes with oxygen masks after “mistakes” like that, and Gibbs says [no one can get prepared for that kind of turbulence](#):

VIDEO -

“Robert Gibbs, speaking of catching our breath,” said the MSNBC host, “I’m just curious. Are there oxygen masks in the press secretary’s office when the president says something like he said on last week where the oxygen masks drop and you can catch a deep breath before you go talk to him? I mean, that obviously — we all know it was a slip. But that obviously, everybody in the White House had to gasp when he did that, right? You’ve been there. ... He’s human—mistakes are made.”

“I think whenever you have to go out next and say what somebody meant to say or what somebody was trying to say means you’re trying to explain that wince-able moment that you see,” Gibbs said this morning. “Unfortunately, there are not oxygen masks and there’s no one to tell you fasten your seat belt because there is turbulence in the area.”

In other words, *explaining is losing*. In this case, though, the losing seems to have been well under way for a very long time before Obama ever uttered the remark.

<http://hotair.com/archives/2014/09/02/fox-news-obama-briefed-for-more-than-a-year-on-isis-as-serious-threat/>