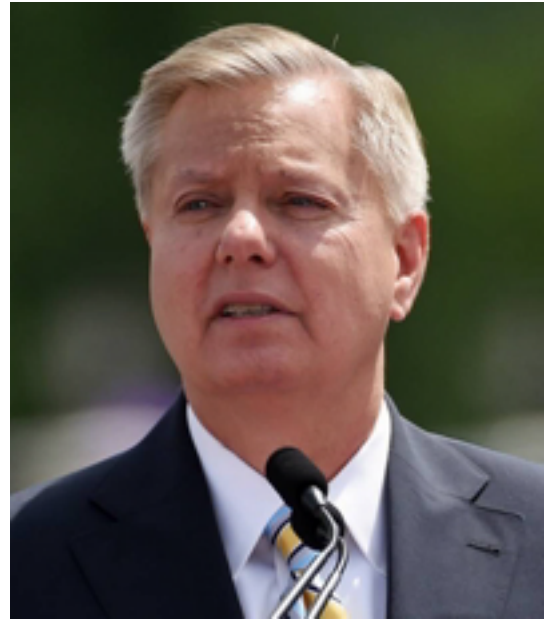


Interview with Presidential Candidate Senator Lindsey Graham (R-SC)

by Chuck Douglas, Editor

Editor: Senator, do you want to contain or defeat ISIS?

Senator Graham: I want to destroy radical Islam. The way you win this war is that you partner with people in the faith. What Mr. Trump said about banning all Muslims is actually very hurtful to the war effort. The only way you can possibly destroy radical Islam is from within the faith itself. Trump sounds like he is declaring war on the faith itself.



I've been to the Mid-east, Iraq and Afghanistan 36 times in the last decade. I know how hard it is for our partners in the region like Jordan to survive. Mr. Trump has made it hard for King Abdullah and others like Egypt to partner with us and he has made it easier for ISIS to recruit. He did the one thing that you would never want to do in the Mid-east, namely denigrate their faith because the only way you win this war is to partner with people in the faith and the vast majority of Muslims reject radical Islam.

Editor: What would winning look like years from now?

Senator Graham: There is no capital over ISIS to destroy; there is no Air Force to shoot down or a Navy to sink. So here is winning: over the arc of time it would mean in the end, the countries involved can contain the threat within their own borders, with their police forces and their armies being capable of dealing with mere remnants of radical Islam there. Responsible Imams will preach again without being killed.

Politicians will reject the ISIS way of governing, women will have a voice about their life and their children, the rural areas will be safe enough that people do not need to form militias, and the local police and judges would be seen as fair-minded.

Admittedly that day is a long way away, but it came to pass in Germany and it came to Japan. Out of those totalitarian states emerged two of our best allies, Germany and Japan.

Editor: So you think we can effect change?

Senator Graham: There is nothing unique about this phenomenon. Other religions have had this problem, but radical Islam is a very viral vitriolic form of religion and the way you win is that you empower others in the area. For those who have the will to say no, you must provide them with the capability to do so. Sometimes it is military force, sometimes it is training armies and police forces, sometimes its economic relationships, foreign assistance, even building a small school house in a remote

poor region in the Mid-east will do more damage to radical Islam than a bomb.

The good news is that most people are not buying what ISIS is selling. Most moms and dads don't want to turn their daughter and sons over to ISIS. Young people are very much less secretarian today and they are hoping to have a better life. In the Mid-east now is a fight for the heart and soul of Islam between radicals and regular Muslims.

Young people want social justice and do not want to disenfranchise women and they aren't going to live in dictatorships for our convenience any longer. So, when you hear somebody say I wish Saddam was back or Gaddafi was back, then you go live there. Because the people who lived in those dictatorships reject that model. We should embrace the young people and their demand for change.

Editor: What about intelligence gathering in the internet era?

Senator Graham: There are two things we're talking about. Stopping another 9/11, before they attack us, so when you capture someone who is a high value target they would be treated as an enemy combatant under the law of war and not read their Miranda rights, but kept within the confines of the law of war where you can question them for intelligence gathering purposes to put the puzzle together.

Also combating the enemy in cyber space and its recruiting is a new battle for the hearts and minds of Muslims.

You have to take ISIS down not only militarily, but you have to expose its ideology for being what it is – religious Nazis. We did it in Iraq. It's working in Afghanistan. We marginalize the enemy in cyber space. We need an information battle plan, but the voices have to be from the region. We created TV shows in Afghanistan that put the police in a positive light so women would join the police force. We had sort of a Kandahar CSI program.

Editor: Speaking of Kandahar and the situation in Afghanistan I had read that we are shutting off money for diesel to keep the electric plant going in Kandahar. If we continue down that road won't it fall to the Taliban?

Senator Graham: Yeah, we are shooting ourselves in the foot there. President Obama wants to end all wars. Great goal, but you either win a war or you lose a war or by mutual consent you both stop fighting. Our presence in Afghanistan is now 9,800 and he's talking about going down to 1,500 by 2017. That would be a disaster. The Afghan army and police are doing better, but democracy is hard and building capacity in a war torn country takes a long time. Again, you can do more damage to a radical ideology through jobs, education and electricity in a functioning city than you can through dropping a bomb. Most average people over there want to move in a different direction, but they have to have hope. Our goal, quite frankly should be to offer hope for a better life, not just a glorious death.

If I were president we would keep at least 10,000 of our service people in Afghanistan training their forces with a couple of thousand troops as counter-terrorism forces to go out and work with Afghans in eliminating the threat to their homeland.

Editor: Why should a Republican or Independent vote for Senator Lindsey Graham?

Senator Graham: I think I'm the best qualified to be Commander in Chief on day one. One percent of us serve in uniform to protect the other 99%.

I hope every voter would consider that your vote is going to be used to pick the next Commander in Chief in a time of war. So pick somebody with a background and judgment that could lead this country as a war time president.

No one has spent more time understanding the enemy and our friends over there than I have. Everyone in the Mid-east knows me, friends and foes alike.

I served thirty-three years in the Air Force with 140 days on the ground over there. As a Senator, I've taken 36 trips to the region trying to understand what works and what doesn't. I've looked at what worked for Bush and what mistakes he made.

I've made mistakes, Obama has made mistakes, but I've learned. I think I've got the clearest idea of what it takes to win. I've been calling for more American boots on the ground in Iraq and Syria for two years now.

I don't want to send more people over, but we have to. Just going from 3,500 to 10,000 would make a big difference in stabilizing Iraq.

We also need a regional army where the Arabs and Turkey do most of the fighting with our help, 90% them, 10% us. But what I have to offer above all others is knowing the region. I'm a trusted voice.

I think I would be a good Commander-in-Chief because I've walked in the shoes of those who are doing the fighting.

I also think that I'm the type of Republican that can draw support from young people interested in climate change and that Hillary Clinton's definition of flat-broke and mine is quite a bit different.

I'm the first in my family to go to college and neither of my parents finished high school. My mom died of Hodgkins disease and when I was 22, my dad died and I had a 13 year old sister to raise.

Without family, friends and faith I wouldn't be where I am today. and I want to be President to make America safer.

I ask for your support and your vote in the Republican primary next February.

Editor: Thank you Senator.