

Baltimore, Sept 13 (AP) - President Barack Obama cast the worldwide campaign he's leading to destroy the Islamic State group on Friday as part of a broader effort to root out extremism within the Muslim world, telling Jewish donors the U.S. "is on the right side of history."

At a fundraiser for Senate Democrats in Baltimore, Obama said he was confident that Islamic State militants would eventually be defeated, thanks in part to a more inclusive Iraqi government and the broad coalition that Obama is seeking to assemble.

Yet he also said the crisis in the Middle East, while terrible, has a silver lining.

"It's focused attention, I think, for the first time in a long time in the Muslim world about the need to completely distance from and ultimately stomp out this particular brand of Islamic extremism that really has no place in the 21st century," Obama said.

Obama's pitch to donors, usually upbeat and economically focused as the midterm elections grow near, took on a more somber tone than usual on Friday, two days after the president gave a prime-time address announcing a major expansion of the U.S. military effort in the Middle East, including airstrikes for the first time in Syria.

Hosting Obama and Maryland's two senators for the high-priced fundraiser was Howard Friedman, the former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, a pro-Israel lobby. As Obama's motorcade rolled through the streets of this heavily Jewish neighborhood, religious Jews lined the streets bearing signs reading "Let Israel defend itself" and "Stop fundraising, fight terrorism."

Obama didn't mention Israel or the fragile cease-fire between Israel's government and Hamas. But Friedman, who quoted from the Torah, the Jewish holy scripture, as he introduced the president, thanked Obama for recognizing that the prospect of a nuclear Iran poses the greatest danger to the U.S. Israel considers Iran's nuclear ambitions an existential threat, and the U.S. and other world powers are in negotiations to scale back Iran's nuclear program.

The president has been raising money at a rapid pace throughout the summer for Democratic political committees as his party seeks to maintain its fragile Senate majority. Obama told donors that the U.S. has made progress and is poised to grow even more, if voters side with Democrats who he said are pursuing a vision of expanded opportunity.

"We are the envy of the world, but in order to actually, fully realize that potential we've got to have a government that works," Obama said.