

# The President's National Strategy For Combating Terrorism

"We're engaged in a global struggle against the followers of a murderous ideology that despises freedom and crushes all dissent, and has territorial ambitions and pursues totalitarian aims. ... And against such an enemy there is only one effective response: We will never back down, we will never give in and we will never accept anything less than complete victory. ... We will defeat the terrorists and their hateful ideology by spreading the hope of freedom across the world. ... The security of our nation depends on the advance of liberty in other nations."

–President George W. Bush  
July 4, 2006

**Today, The President Released His Updated National Strategy For Combating Terrorism (NSCT), Which Outlines The United States Government Strategy To Protect And Defend American Interests At Home And Abroad From Terrorism.** In the years since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States, along with our partners, have waged a relentless war against the terrorists using all elements of national power and influence. We have made substantial progress in degrading the al-Qaida network, killing or capturing key lieutenants, eliminating safehavens, and disrupting existing lines of support.

**In Response To Our Efforts, The Terrorists Have Adjusted And So We Have Continued To Refine Our Approach To Defeat The Evolving Threat.** Today, the United States is battling a transnational terrorist movement fueled by a radical ideology of hatred, oppression, and murder. This updated strategy incorporates our increased understanding of the enemy and sets the course for winning the War on Terror.

## Strategic Vision For The War On Terror

**Our Strategy Recognizes That The War On Terror Is A Different Kind Of War, Involving Both A Battle Of Arms And A Battle Of Ideas.** Not only are we fighting our terrorist enemies on the battlefield, we are promoting freedom and human dignity as alternatives to the terrorists' perverse vision of oppression and totalitarian rule. To win the War on Terror, the United States will continue to lead an expansive international effort to:

- Defeat violent extremism as a threat to our way of life as a free and open society.
- Create a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and their supporters.

## Advancing Effective Democracy Over The Long-Term

**The Long-Term Solution For Winning The War On Terror Is The Advancement Of Freedom And Human Dignity Through Effective Democracy.** Effective democracies honor and uphold basic human rights, including freedom of religion, conscience, speech, assembly, association, and press. They are the long-term antidote to the ideology of terrorism today. This is the battle of ideas.

**Defeating Terrorism In The Long Run Requires That We Diminish The Underlying Conditions In Society That Terrorists Seek To Exploit By Advancing Effective Democracy:**

- **Terrorists Exploit Political Alienation.** Democracy gives people an ownership stake in society.
- **Terrorists Exploit Grievances To Blame Others.** Democracy offers the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the habits of advancing interests through compromise.
- **Terrorists Exploit Misinformation And Conspiracy Theories.** Democracy offers freedom of speech, independent media, and a marketplace of ideas to expose and discredit falsehoods.
- **Terrorists Exploit An Ideology That Justifies Murder.** Democracy offers a respect for human dignity and rejects the targeting of innocents.

## Four Priorities Over The Short Term

**The Advance Of Freedom And Human Dignity Through Democracy Is The Long-Term Solution To The Transnational Terrorism Of Today.** To create the space and time for that long-term solution to take root, there are four steps we are taking in the short term. We will:

- **Prevent Attacks By Terrorist Networks.** Working with partners across the globe, we are using a range of tools at home and abroad to take the fight to the terrorists, deny them entry to the United States, hinder their movement across international boundaries, and establish protective measures to further reduce our vulnerability to attack.
- **Deny WMD To Rogue States And Terrorist Allies Who Seek To Use Them.** Weapons of mass destruction in the hands of terrorists is one of the gravest threats we face. We have taken aggressive efforts to deny terrorists access to WMD-related materials, equipment, and expertise, and we are enhancing these activities through an integrated effort at all levels of government and with the private sector and our foreign partners to stay ahead of this dynamic and evolving threat.
- **Deny Terrorists The Support And Sanctuary Of Rogue States.** We make no distinction between those who commit acts of terror and those who support and harbor terrorists. We are working to disrupt the flow of resources from states to terrorists while simultaneously end state sponsorship of terrorism.
- **Deny Terrorists Control Of Any Area They Would Use As A Base And Launching Pad For Terror.** We are working to prevent terrorists from exploiting ungoverned and under-governed areas as physical safehavens. These efforts also extend to non-physical or virtual safehavens, such as those existing within legal, cyber, and financial systems.

#### **Institutionalizing The Strategy For Long-Term Success**

**During The Cold War We Created An Array Of Domestic And International Institutions As Well As Enduring Partnerships To Defeat The Threat Of Communism – Today We Require Similar Structures To Win The Long War On Terror.** We are transforming our domestic and international institutions and enduring partnerships to carry forward the long term fight against terror and to help ensure our ultimate success.

- **Establishing International Standards Of Accountability:** We are collaborating with our partners to update and tailor international obligations and standards of accountability to meet the evolving threat of terrorism. Efforts already underway in this regard include consultations with the G-8 and others to develop landmark counterterrorism standards and best practices.
- **Strengthening Our Coalitions And Partnerships To Maintain A United Front Against Terror.** We are building the capacity of foreign partners in all areas of counterterrorism activities. Through the provision of training, equipment, and other assistance, the United States will enhance the ability of partners across the globe to attack and defeat terrorists, deny them funding and freedom of movement, secure their critical infrastructures, and deny terrorists access to WMD and safehavens.
- **Enhancing Our Counterterrorism Architecture And Interagency Collaboration By Setting Clear National Priorities And Transforming The Government To Achieve Those Priorities.** This includes the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security, Director of National Intelligence, and the National Counterterrorism Center. Additionally, our military is expanding Special Operations Forces, increasing the capabilities of the general purpose force to conduct irregular warfare in an asymmetric environment, and initiating the largest rearrangement of its force posture since World War II. The State Department is repositioning its domestic and overseas staff to better promote America's policies and interests and have more direct local and regional impact.
- **Fostering Intellectual And Human Capital By Creating An Expert Community Of Counterterrorism Professionals And Developing A Domestic Culture Of Preparedness.** This Culture of Preparedness rests on a shared acknowledgement of the certainty of future catastrophes; the importance of initiative and accountability at all levels of society; the role of citizen and community preparedness; and a delineation of the roles of each level of government and the private sector in creating a prepared nation.