



THE WHITE HOUSE
PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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The Rest of the Story: The NIE Reflects Previous Statements About the War on Terror

[Setting the Record Straight](#)

Impact Of Iraq

Declassified Key Judgments Of The National Intelligence Estimate (NIE): "We Assess That The Iraq Jihad Is Shaping A New Generation Of Terrorist Leaders And Operatives; Perceived Jihadist Success There Would Inspire More Fighters To Continue The Struggle Elsewhere." (Office Of The Director Of National Intelligence, "Declassified Key Judgments Of The National Intelligence Estimate 'Trends In Global Terrorism: Implications For The United States' Dated April 2006," Released 9/26/06)

- **President Bush: "Al Qaeda And Other Extremists From Across The World Have Come To Iraq To Stop The Rise Of A Free Society In The Heart Of The Middle East."** (President Bush, Address To The Nation, Washington, DC, 9/11/06)
- **President Bush: Terrorists Consider Iraq "The Central Battlefield" In The War On Terror.** "But they've made clear that the most important front in their struggle against America is Iraq – the nation bin Laden has declared the 'capital of the Caliphate.' Hear the words of bin Laden: 'I now address... the whole... Islamic nation: Listen and understand... The most... serious issue today for the whole world is this Third World War... [that] is raging in [Iraq].' He calls it 'a war of destiny between infidelity and Islam.' He says, 'The whole world is watching this war,' and that it will end in 'victory and glory or misery and humiliation.' For al Qaeda, Iraq is not a distraction from their war on America – it is the central battlefield where the outcome of this struggle will be decided." (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)
- **President Bush: "If We Give Up The Fight In The Streets Of Baghdad, We Will Face The Terrorists In The Streets Of Our Own Cities."** (President Bush, Remarks, Salt Lake City, UT, 8/31/06)
- **White House National Strategy For Combating Terrorism (NSCT): "The Ongoing Fight For Freedom In Iraq Has Been Twisted By Terrorist Propaganda As A Rallying Cry."** (The White House, "National Strategy For Combating Terrorism," September 2006, Available At: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nsct/2006/>)

Adaptation Of The Global Jihadist Movement

NIE: "We Also Assess That The Global Jihadist Movement ... Is Spreading And Adapting To Counterterrorism Efforts."

- **President Bush: "As Al Qaeda Changes, The Broader Terrorist Movement Is Also Changing, Becoming More Dispersed And Self-Directed."** (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)
- **NSCT: "The Enemy We Face Today In The War On Terror Is Not The Same Enemy We Faced On September 11."** NSCT: "Our effective counterterrorist efforts, in part, have forced the terrorists to evolve and modify their ways of doing business. Our understanding of the enemy has evolved as well."

Threat From Self-Radicalized Cells

NIE: "We Assess That The Operational Threat From Self-Radicalized Cells Will Grow In Importance To US Counterterrorism Efforts, Particularly Abroad But Also In The Homeland."

- **President Bush: "More And More, We're Facing Threats From Locally Established Terrorist Cells That Are Inspired By Al Qaeda's Ideology And Goals, But Do Not Necessarily Have Direct Links To Al Qaeda, Such As Training And Funding."** "Some of these groups are made up of 'homegrown' terrorists, militant extremists who were born and educated in Western nations, were indoctrinated by radical Islamists or attracted to their ideology, and joined the violent extremist cause. These locally established cells appear to be responsible for a number of attacks and plots, including those in Madrid, and Canada, and other countries across the world." (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)

Decentralization Of The Global Jihadist Movement

NIE: "We Assess That The Global Jihadist Movement Is Decentralized, Lacks A Coherent Global Strategy, And Is Becoming More Diffuse." "New jihadist networks and cells, with anti-American agendas, are increasingly likely to emerge. The confluence of shared purpose and dispersed actors will make it harder to find and undermine jihadist groups."

- **NSCT: "Terrorist Networks Today Are More Dispersed And Less Centralized."** "They are more reliant on smaller cells inspired by a common ideology and less directed by a central command structure."
- **NSCT: "Today, The Principal Terrorist Enemy Confronting The United States Is A Transnational Movement Of Extremist Organizations, Networks, And Individuals – And Their State And Non-State Supporters – Which Have In Common That They Exploit Islam And Use Terrorism For Ideological Ends."**

Underlying Factors Of The Global Jihadist Movement

NIE: "We Assess That The Underlying Factors Fueling The Spread Of The Movement Outweigh Its Vulnerabilities And Are Likely To Do So For The Duration Of The Timeframe Of This Estimate."

- **President Bush: "In The Early Days After 9/11, I Told The American People That This Would Be A Long War – A War That Would Look Different From Others We Have Fought, With Difficulties And Setbacks Along The Way. The Past Five Years Have Proven That To Be True."** (President Bush, Remarks, 9/7/06)
- **President Bush: Our Previous Strategy Of "Pursuing Stability To Promote Peace [In The Middle East] ... Left Us With Neither."** "So we changed our policies, and committed America's influence in the world to advancing freedom and democracy as the great alternatives to repression and radicalism." (President Bush, Address To The Nation, Washington, DC, 9/11/06)

Threat From Al-Qaeda

NIE: "United States-Led Counterterrorism Efforts Have Seriously Damaged The Leadership Of Al-Qaeda And Disrupted Its Operations; However, We Judge That Al-Qaeda Will Continue To Pose The Greatest Threat To The Homeland And US Interests Abroad By A Single Terrorist Organization."

- **President Bush: We Have "Damaged The Leadership Of Al-Qaeda And Disrupted Its Operations ... Yet Al Qaeda Remains Dangerous And Determined."** (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)
- **President Bush: "Today, We Are Safer, But We Are Not Yet Safe."** (President Bush, Address To The Nation, Washington, DC, 9/11/06)
- **NSCT: "... Al Qaida Functions As The Movement's Vanguard And Remains Along With Its Affiliate Groups And Those Inspired By Them, The Most Dangerous Present Manifestation Of The Enemy ..."**

Dangers Posed By Al-Qaeda Affiliates

NIE: "We Assess That [Other Affiliated Sunni Extremist Organizations] Pose Less Of A Danger To The Homeland Than Does Al-Qaeda But Will Pose Varying Degrees Of Threat To Our Allies And To US Interests Abroad."

- **President Bush: We Are Facing Threats "Posed By Different Strains Of Violent Islamic Radicalism."** (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)
- **"9/11 Five Years Later: Successes And Challenges":** "Unlike conventional enemies, terrorists do not fight on a defined battlefield. They are found throughout the world, even in countries that are friendly to us." (The White House, "9/11 Five Years Later: Successes And

Challenges," September 2006, Available At: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/waronterror/2006/waronterror0906.pdf/>)

Tactics Of Jihadist Groups

NIE: "We Judge That Most Jihadist Groups – Both Well-Known And Newly Formed – Will Use Improvised Explosive Devices And Suicide Attacks Focused Primarily On Soft Targets To Implement Their Asymmetric Warfare Strategy, And That They Will Attempt To Conduct Sustained Terrorist Attacks In Urban Environments." "Fighters with experience in Iraq are a potential source of leadership for jihadists pursuing these tactics."

- **President Bush: "These Terrorists Know They Cannot Defeat Us Militarily – So They Have Turned To The Weapon Of Fear. And One Of The Most Brutal Weapons At Their Disposal Are Improvised Explosive Devices, Or IEDs."** "In 2004, the administration spent \$150 million to fight the IED threat. This year, we're providing \$3.3 billion to support our efforts to defeat IEDs." (President Bush, Remarks, 3/13/06)
- **NSCT: "They Use Suicide Bombings, Beheadings, And Other Atrocities Against Innocent People As A Means To Promote Their Creed."**

Use Of The Internet

NIE: "We Judge That Groups Of All Stripes Will Increasingly Use The Internet To Communicate, Propagandize, Recruit, Train, And Obtain Logistical And Financial Support."

- **President Bush: "Increasingly, Al Qaeda Is Taking Advantage Of The Internet To Disseminate Propaganda, And To Conduct 'Virtual Recruitment' And 'Virtual Training' Of New Terrorists."** (President Bush, Remarks, Washington, DC, 9/5/06)
- **NSCT: "Increasingly Sophisticated Use Of The Internet And Media Has Enabled Our Terrorist Enemies To Communicate, Recruit, Train, Rally Support, Proselytize, And Spread Their Propaganda Without Risking Personal Contact."**

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