

## **Challenges Ahead**

We are engaged in a war against a violent extremist movement driven by an ideology that threatens the basic aspirations of all people everywhere. Though our international partners and we have made great strides in this War on Terror, the challenges before us are formidable. Although its leaders and their safehavens and resources are increasingly isolated and besieged, al-Qaida and its affiliates and groups adhering to its ideology continue to plan attacks and continue to seek weapons of mass destruction. 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. We must therefore help other states to strengthen their will and ability to bring the fight to the enemy. We must continue to use all instruments of national power and influence in the War on Terror: diplomatic, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement.

### ***Challenges to Defeating the Terrorist Enemy***

- Terrorists' increased dispersion, use of nonphysical ("virtual") safehavens, and informal operational and logistical coordination complicate efforts to find and defeat them.
- In Iraq, al-Qaida and associated foreign terrorists have made clear that their goal is to build a Taliban-like state and then expand their battle to neighboring states. In the near future, some of these terrorists could return to their home countries, exacerbating domestic conflicts or fomenting radical ideologies.
- Terrorists and insurgents are increasingly using media and the Internet to spread propaganda, rally support, and share experiences, as well as a means to communicate with each other.

### ***Challenges to Denying Support and Safehaven***

- Some state sponsors of terrorism continue to provide funding and weapons to terrorists and offer safehavens from which terrorists plan and conduct operations. Most worrisome is that some of these countries also have developed or have the capability to manufacture weapons of mass destruction and other destabilizing technologies that could fall into the hands of terrorists. In addition, ungoverned and undergoverned spaces, often on frontiers between nations and overlaying failed states, provide safehavens that terrorists exploit.
- Iran is the world's leading state provider of political, material, and financial support to Hizballah and Palestinian rejectionist groups and remains unwilling to hand over senior al-Qaida members for prosecution.
- Syria allows various groups to operate from its soil. It provides both material and political support to Lebanese Hizballah and Palestinian terrorist groups. North Korea's cooperation with Syria in the missile and other WMD areas may enhance Syria's expertise and ability to provide similar assistance, deliberately or inadvertently, to terrorist organizations.
- Cuba continues the actions that led to its designation as a state sponsor.

### ***Challenges to Combating the Violent Extremist Ideology***

- Al-Qaida propagandists continue to exploit local grievances to create the sense that the Muslim world is aggrieved and disrespected. A key challenge remains understanding the motivations of those who join or support terrorist networks, as well as the incentives and