

Introduction

In the aftermath of the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States, the President led an historic transformation of the Government, improving our ability to protect and defend the Homeland, our citizens, and our installations, assets, and interests abroad. As a result, we are now better informed of terrorist threats, with improved intelligence collection and analysis painting a more complete picture; and we are better organized to address the threat, with a more robust information sharing capability and a greater capacity for coordinated and integrated action.

The United States, with its partners in the Coalition in the War on Terror, has made significant strides against al-Qaida, its affiliates, and others who threaten us. We have uncovered and eliminated numerous threats to our citizens and those of our friends and allies. We have disrupted terrorist plots, arrested operatives, and captured or killed senior leaders. Collectively, we have made progress in constraining the ability of al-Qaida and like-minded terrorist groups to operate and survive.

Our campaign against the global terrorist network has been consistent and exhaustive. We have designated as terrorists those individuals and groups that align themselves with al-Qaida or otherwise attack innocent civilians to advance a violent extremist ideology, as well as those who provide financial or other material support to terrorist entities. Through the U.N., we have changed the international culture with respect to terrorism, seizing and freezing terrorists finances, promoting the criminalization of terrorism and related acts, and setting forth frameworks for legal and law enforcement efforts to combat terrorism and to promote systems that deny safehaven to terrorists.

Since the September 11 attacks, America and its allies are safer, but we are not yet safe. We have done much to degrade al-Qaida and its affiliates and to undercut the perceived legitimacy of terrorism. Our Muslim partners are speaking out against those who seek to use their religion to justify violence and a totalitarian vision of the world. We have significantly expanded our counterterrorism Coalition, transforming old adversaries into new and vital partners in the War on Terror. In addition, we have transformed our governmental institutions and framework to wage a long-term struggle.

Our efforts have directly influenced the nature of our enemy and the threat we face. Our enemy is evolving and adapting its tactics. As stated in the National Strategy to Combat Terrorism, 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.

We have serious challenges ahead, including defeating the enemy, denying safehaven, combating the violent extremist ideology, protecting the homeland, securing WMD, and building partnership capacity. We must continue to strengthen and adapt our strategy and capabilities over the long term. We remain committed to identifying, pursuing, and eliminating the global scourge of terrorism and violent extremism and attacking terrorists, their networks, affiliates, and sources of support.