

A National Security Policy for 2009

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Any national security policy of the United States must be based first and foremost on the defense of our own country and the protection of American citizens. Whatever else our government may undertake, the safety and security of the American people must be the first object of government. This common sense principle was well articulated at the time of the Founding and can be found in the contemporaneous documents surrounding the establishment of our nation. The Preamble to the United States Constitution states that “In order to form a more perfect union,” among the preeminent tasks of our government is to “provide for the common defense.” In the third *Federalist* paper, John Jay wrote, “Among the many objects to which a wise and free people find it necessary to direct their attention, that of providing for their safety seems to be the first.”

History teaches us that Americans have strongly supported the United States in every war she has undertaken throughout our long history. We may have been tentative about *going* to war throughout our history (as we certainly were prior to December 7, 1941), *but once a war commenced*, the American people—for the most part—united to wage war and earn victory. This is true of the post World War II period as well, where intellectuals, organizations and think tanks—too numerous to be named—helped provide the intellectual defense of the West and the cause of our nation. Today, ironically, after the most dramatic, drastic, and deadly attack on the United States from an outside entity, such a unified mind and intellectual defense of our cause and country does not exist. There is little agreement about our cause, there is little agreement about what victory in a war against terrorism constitutes, there is little agreement about whether we should even stay the course, increase the course, or abandon and surrender a key battlefield in that larger war. Indeed, one of the two major political parties in America has organized as the first object of its foreign policy a surrender in that very battlefield—Iraq.

The threats against the United States are today both military and intellectual. A rising threat from Russia and China (whose governments have no doubts about increasing their military capabilities), a nuclear ambitious North Korea, a terrorist sponsoring *and* nuclear ambitious Iran, are only the beginnings of the understanding of the numerous threats we face. We pause to note that even as we identify the dangers from these four countries alone, we still remain unprotected as a nation from almost any kind of missile attack. In the meantime, much of our infrastructure remains unsafe from suitcase and dirty-bomb attacks. And, terrorist supporting regimes such as Syria work with North Korea on nuclear proliferation, Lebanon daily teeters on the brink of being overtaken by Hezbollah, and radical Islam is a growth industry in both the Middle East and large parts of Asia. It runs Iran, it runs Gaza, it runs vast parts of Saudi Arabia, and it is attempting to take over many other countries.

George Orwell stated, “The first duty of intelligent men is a restatement of the obvious.”

We need to undertake several steps to put us on a war footing and begin the resetting of policy on a firm moral and prudential basis. We believe the following steps should be immediately taken:

1. Name the war. Every description of the conflict we are now in should be labeled by government spokesmen and women with one term, and thus put the American people in a singular frame of mind from its elected leaders. We suggest “The Global War Against Islamic Terror.”
2. The President has stated the administration’s intention to increase the size of our active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 over the next several years. That number is too small. Today, we spend less than 4 percent of our GDP on the military. That number pales in comparison to peacetime military spending in other eras. In 1961, for example, GDP spending on military was over 9 percent. In 1971, it was over 7 percent. In 1981, it was over 5 percent and reached as high as 6.2 percent during the decade. We advocate a military spending budget that is at least as high as it was in the 1980s and that our military be rebuilt based on the wide array of threats that we face now and into the future.
3. We should establish a comprehensive layered missile defense system that will protect our nation from any incoming missile attack. We can achieve this goal within three years with a financial commitment of under 30 billion dollars per year, as outlined by the Independent Working Group on Missile Defense. We Americans have debated such a system for more than two decades and have only now begun a very rudimentary system, which by the president’s own admission remains quite “modest.” Every necessary technology is available to us to build a system that will defend the United States from attack using land, sea, and space-based interceptors. All that has been lacking is the will to do it. Now is the time to make it happen.
4. We should stop economic aid to all countries of questionable allegiance to the United States, countries that abuse human rights, and countries that oppose our efforts against radical Islam. Here the corrupt regime of Saudi Arabia stands as a singular affront to our national interest. In addition, the United States has no business actively supporting the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank—it is nothing more than the PLO with the trappings of government officialdom. Moreover we should encourage citizens not to invest in corporations that do business in countries that sponsor terrorism.
5. Our Iran policy needs to be overhauled. High-level discussions and negotiations with this rogue regime should stop. Iranian officials should no longer be granted travel or diplomatic visas to visit the United States, enabling them to wage their propaganda here. And the United States government should begin working toward a democratic Iran much the way it worked toward a democratic Europe throughout the Cold War, and without military action. Michael Ledeen has testified to Congress:

We...need to provide Iranian revolutionaries with the wherewithal for two vitally important revolutionary actions: build resources for a strike fund, and get them modern instruments of communication. The strike fund speaks for itself: workers need to be able to walk off the job, above all the oil fields and the textile and transportation sectors, and know they will be able to feed their families for several weeks.

The instruments of communication include servers, laptops, satellite and cell phones and phone cards. The regime has been more effective in identifying and repressing nation-wide communications among dissidents. They have been less effective quashing local networks. We should accordingly provide the local networks advanced technology in order for them to better communicate between cities and regions.

6. Given the ends to which our enemies will go to destroy us, we should, as Claremont Institute Fellow Mark Helprin has written, “[B]egin an effort on a scale several times greater than that of the Manhattan Project, and with similar or greater urgency, to find antidotes, immunizations, and effective treatment for the full range of chemical and biological warfare agents. Once these are brought into being, they should be channeled into an immense nationwide distribution and application system, so that every attack can be quickly and thoroughly isolated, suppressed, and ameliorated. Each American should have access to the full range of immunizations available.”
7. Enforce the Solomon Amendment. Passed in 1996, the Solomon Amendment forbids our colleges and universities from obstructing ROTC and its affiliated programs in their recruiting and other efforts on our nation’s campuses. Nonetheless, several colleges and universities have ignored the Amendment and thwarted those very efforts and programs. The Department of Defense has been loath to enforce the Amendment—that should cease and the Amendment should be enforced fully. This will not only open up more opportunities for college and graduate students but, as importantly, send a signal to our larger culture that our nation’s schools will not receive taxpayer dollars when they thwart taxpayers’ national objectives. Such seriousness in the enforcement of policy is critically important.
8. The Justice Department should vigorously investigate the leaking of classified, wartime national security information and prosecute those who have broken their non-disclosure agreements. Where the media has been complicit in securing and printing such classified information, they, too, should be investigated and subpoenaed for information. They are the recipients of illegal goods and witnesses to a crime. Should members of the media refuse to comply, they should be prosecuted (instead, today, they are awarded Pulitzer Prizes). In the interim, too many are too willing to invest the media with extra-ordinary protections, such as media shield laws. We object.

9. The current and previous administrations have been close with too many organizations that pose as moderate and charitable institutions serving the afflicted of the Middle East and their interests here. In fact, many of these groups serve as front groups for terrorist or terrorist-supporting organizations and have highly questionable ties. Those groups should have no favor with the administration and, furthermore, should be vigorously investigated, highlighted, and shunned.
10. Finally, the United States should never retreat from any war in rightly engages. The global war against Islamic terror—whether fought in Iraq, Afghanistan or the greater Middle East—is a defense of both America and Western Civilization. It must be prosecuted deliberately and effectively for our sake and for future generations of Americans.

Almost all of these proposals should be incontrovertible in a time of war and yet they are not being done, they are not being spoken about, and, more seriously, they are only a beginning. We and our allies face an existential threat that the American people well-understood in the days following September 11, 2001. Much has been said and done since then, most of it confusing to the American people, and it has led to a loss of focus and a loss of seriousness. The foregoing ten steps will be continually promoted and constitute the beginning steps we will urge upon the next presidential administration.

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