

The Way Forward in the War on Terror

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2005 Annual Homeland Defense Symposium, Colorado Springs,

Colorado

October 25, 2005

We have often heard that 9-11, 2001, changed everything in America. For the first time since Pearl Harbor, war came to our shores and 3,000 innocent people lost their lives. As the Ranking Member of the Terrorism Subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, I stood, as some of you did, at the Pentagon hours after the attack. A few days later, I stood at Ground Zero in New York as the smoke still rose from the rubble. Like many of you, I said, "Never again", and we turned our attention to the first great challenge of the 21st century.

America was as united as at any time in our history. We did the right thing when, without hesitation, we turned our sights on the Taliban in Afghanistan where Bin Laden and his radical Islamic band found safe haven plotting and planning the attacks against our nation.

Now over 4 years later, we must ask ourselves, are we any closer to defeating this enemy? Have we pursued the right strategies? Or, in the words of Secretary Rumsfeld's highly publicized memo from a couple of years ago, "Are we capturing or killing as many terrorists as the radical madrasses are graduating every day?"

In my view, it is time for thoughtful analysis of where we have been and where we are going in the War on Terror. We need a clear path forward and a sharpened focus in critical areas:

1. We must know our enemy better
2. We must attack the enemy with greater speed and precision both tactically and strategically.
3. We must place priority on catastrophic threats.

4. We must improve management and oversight.
5. We must marshal the resources of the private sector.

The first rule of military engagement is to know your enemy. And knowing the enemy is important, not just from a military perspective, but it is critical for the American people to know the enemy as well. In a democracy, public perception translates to public policy.

Today we often say we are fighting a “War on Terror”. But terrorism is a tactic and fails to define the real enemy. The real enemy is a political movement of radical Islamic extremists. Their goals are multi-faceted:

1. They seek to drive the United States and the West out of the Muslim world.
2. They seek to topple what they perceive to be apostate regimes in Muslim countries.

3. They seek to defend Muslims wherever they view them as oppressed, and

4. They seek to restore an Islamic super-state.

Terrorism is a tool they use to facilitate the achievement of their goals. Although Al Qaeda has been the central focus of the radical Islamic fundamentalism, the movement is not monolithic or centrally directed. Its followers are various groups in far flung places around the globe. The movement consists of hard core terrorists, radical Islamic intellectuals and clerics, and a large body of non-violent supporters and sympathizers. They are a minority of the Islamic faith and mainstream Islam is not the enemy. And we must not forget that moderate Muslims are our best allies in the struggle against the extremists.

The extremists embrace suicide operations and martyrdom. Their belief is that catastrophic violence will cause the United States to reexamine its policies, realign geo-political power in the world, and

settle the score for decades of what they believe to be marginalization of the Muslim world by the West.

In the Cold War, we fought godless communism – a political movement backed by nuclear and military force. In the War on Terror, we fight radical Islamic fundamentalism, a political movement backed by acts of terror. But a few thousand determined Islamic extremists bent on suicide attacks do not threaten us in the same way the Soviet Union did in the Cold War. Islamic fundamentalists control no country or national government. Without a defined territory, they are not as readily impacted by military action, or the threat of it, in the same way the Soviet Union was in the Cold War.

Mutual deterrence is not a defense. And our military superiority alone will not defeat terrorism. The level of casualties and economic destruction the terrorists can inflict is limited only by the weaponry they acquire and their ability to evade detection. A few suicide terrorists infected with a deadly pathogen on a plane to several destinations in the

United States could change our country forever. The likelihood of a catastrophic attack is growing and time is not on our side.

Our counterterrorism strategy must be both tactical and strategic. On a tactical level, we must devote more resources to finding and destroying terrorist cells around the world. This is a military, law enforcement, and intelligence task. The fact that we have been unable to capture or kill Bin Laden in over 4 years since 9-11 illustrates the difficulty of the task.

Greater investments in intelligence collection, fusion and analysis at the local, state, federal and international levels are required. Increased education in counterterrorism for local law enforcement, expansion of special forces, covert operations and rapid deployment capabilities will be required.

In addition to these tactical counterterrorism capabilities, we know that the ultimate victory over the radical Islamic extremists will only be achieved through effective strategic counterterrorism.

When the Soviet Union tested its first atomic bomb in 1949, our political leaders were already preparing the American people for the long struggle against communism. The nuclear arms race and the prospect of mutual destruction was the defining characteristic of a long and protracted Cold War. But ultimate victory came because communism and its failed promises was no match for democratic values, individual liberty and the economic benefits of free enterprise. When President Reagan spoke his famous words, "Tear down that wall," the people behind the Iron Curtain were ready to cast off the bonds of oppression and seek a better way.

Today we fight a new enemy, but winning the hearts and minds around the world is still essential to victory. Effective strategic counterterrorism requires:

1. Helping Muslim societies transform themselves from societies of little growth or opportunity to places of hope and progress.

2. Supporting moderate Islamic movements, and encouraging moderate Islamic leaders.

3. Improving opportunities for education, trade and investment in the Muslim world.

4. Supporting Muslim governments willing to institute democratic reform.

5. Leading a broad coalition of the international community in these efforts.

These investments are more politically difficult to sell and sustain than investments in tactical counterterrorism. And they will require the sustained support of the American people. In the wake of the war in Iraq and the natural disasters which have hit our southern coast, our federal budget deficit is growing faster than ever. Investments in strategic

counterterrorism efforts will require leadership to persuade Americans of the long-term benefits.

While we seek the ultimate victory, we must protect the homeland and be prepared to respond to terrorist attacks that will come if our defenses fail. To date, our spending patterns have been largely a reaction to the instruments of terror used on 9-11, with the heaviest investments in aviation security and first responders. Those investments lack a focus on the two threats that would be catastrophic – a nuclear or biological attack, both of which could kill tens of thousands of Americans and lead to economic collapse.

Keeping nuclear and biological weapons out of the hands of terrorists and preparing to respond to a nuclear or major biological event, whether terrorist generated or naturally occurring, as in the case of avian flu, must be our priority. We have invested over \$32 billion dollars in first responders since 9-11. But these dollars have not been targeted to the areas at the highest risk of terrorist attack.

Our efforts to address domestic terrorism by creating the Department of Homeland Security have been beset with problems that should have been anticipated following the largest reorganization of the federal government in 50 years.

We have seen progress with the Department of Defense defining its responsibilities in the area of homeland defense and the creation of the Northern Command. We have strengthened the homeland security mission of the National Guard. We must continue to fine tune the relationship between the federal, state and local governments in disaster response, as our recent failures in the response to Hurricane Katrina pointed out.

Our homeland security investments have resulted in billions of dollars in new federal spending. The budget for the Department of Homeland Security will be just over \$30 billion dollars next fiscal year. If you add in the homeland security spending of all the other agencies,

the number gets closer to \$50 billion. That's over twice the amount we were spending in those agencies in the year before 9-11, but an increase of \$25 to \$30 billion per year over pre 9-11 levels is not in my judgment, a sufficient shift in national priorities in light of the threats we face. That increase is less than 5% of our annual federal discretionary spending. To put it in perspective, the first installment on Hurricane Katrina relief cost the federal government more than our total annual spending on homeland security.

But greater spending alone are not enough. We must be smarter in our investments. We must target them to the catastrophic threats and to the high risk areas for terrorist attack, and failure is not an option. For the cost of failure in lives and dollars far exceeds the cost of the additional investments required.

Success can only be achieved through better management and oversight. This must occur at all levels of government. Following Hurricane Katrina, it is clear that our military is the only place where the

manpower and capability exists to deal with a truly catastrophic event. I commend my former colleague, now Assistant Secretary of Homeland Defense, Paul McHale, for his efforts to move the department more rapidly into these areas.

Improving the capabilities of the Department of Homeland Security, our intelligence services and the Department of Defense is difficult enough, but equally difficult is transforming the Congress to provide the oversight necessary to achieve these goals. When former House Speaker Newt Gingrich testified to Congress last year, he said that if we suffer another terrorist attack, Congress would have blood on its hands if, after reorganizing the executive branch, it failed to reorganize itself. Even after some progress was made in the rules of the House and the Senate last January, the Department of Homeland Security is still left accountable to a multitude of congressional committees. Accountability to many is tantamount to accountability to none. The 9-11 Commission has cited this failure as a part of the unfinished business of its report.

Many observers have noted that the modern Congress is failing in its oversight responsibilities. The three-day work week, competing demands for members' time in Washington and in their districts, overt partisanship, fed by the closely divided partisan balance, all contribute to the neglect of congressional oversight. Solutions to these issues are not easy, but thoughtful members know that a country at war cannot afford a part-time Congress.

Finally, we must do a better job of marshalling the private sector in fighting the War on Terror. In winning World War II, every sector of our economy was fully engaged. Today, we have yet to see the strength and efficiencies of the private sector fully utilized. Innovators are constantly asking, "How do I get my product or service before the right people at DHS or DOD?" The Safety Act has proven to be a slow and cumbersome process at DHS. The national assessment of critical infrastructure, which should be a foundation of decision-making, has yet

to be completed. Improvements are being made, but we cannot afford to lose the innovation and ideas that the private sector can bring to the table.

We must strengthen the training of procurement personnel and give clear pathways for private sector participation in government contracting. The private sector has the technology to secure our borders and examine cargo coming into our country by rail, sea and air. The private sector has the capability to shorten the time frame between the discovery of a new bug and the development of a new vaccine countermeasure. The private sector has the capability to fuse intelligence and convey it to a front line policeman on the beat, a border screener, or to a soldier in the field. This and more is essential to securing the homeland and effective counterterrorism.

Reaching policy makers with your ideas will unleash the full strength of American enterprise in the War on Terror. Our nation has faced great challenges before and we have overcome. Once again, the strength of our ideals and values, supported by a superior military and

homeland defense capability, will see us through to victory. I know we are up to the challenge and we will see the day when American and the world are no longer threatened by radical Islamic fundamentalism.