



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH



For Immediate Release  
March 16, 2006

## Fact Sheet: The President's National Security Strategy

*"The ideals that have inspired our history – freedom, democracy, and human dignity – are increasingly inspiring individuals and nations throughout the world. ... We choose leadership over isolationism, and the pursuit of free trade and open markets over protectionism. We choose to deal with challenges now rather than leaving them for future generations. We fight our enemies abroad instead of waiting for them to arrive in our country. We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it; to influence events for the better instead of being at their mercy."*

*President George W. Bush  
Letter Introducing The National Security Strategy  
March 16, 2006*

### Presidential Action

On March 16, 2006, the White House released President Bush's second term [National Security Strategy](#) (NSS), which reflects the President's most solemn obligation: to protect the security of the American people.

**The NSS explains how we are working to protect the American people, advance American interests, enhance global security, and expand global liberty and prosperity. The strategy is founded upon two pillars:**

- 1. The first pillar is *promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies.***
  - The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world.
  - In the world today, the fundamental character of regimes matters as much as the distribution of power among them. Free governments are accountable to their people, govern their territory effectively, and pursue economic and political policies that benefit their citizens. Free governments do not oppress their people or attack other free nations. Peace and international stability are most reliably built on a foundation of freedom.
- 2. The second pillar of the strategy is confronting the challenges of our time by leading a growing community of democracies.**
  - Many of the problems we face – from the threat of pandemic disease, to proliferation of

weapons of mass destruction, to terrorism, to human trafficking, to natural disasters – reach across borders. Effective multinational efforts are essential to solve these problems. Yet history has shown that only when we do our part will others do theirs. America will continue to lead.

The President's National Security Strategy specifically focuses on the following areas:

### ***Champion Aspirations for Human Dignity***

- The United States champions freedom because doing so reflects our values and advances our interests.
  - Championing freedom advances our interests because the survival of liberty at home increasingly depends on the success of liberty abroad.
  - Because democracies are the most responsible members of the international system, promoting democracy is the most effective long-term measure for strengthening international stability, reducing regional conflicts, countering terrorism and terror-supporting extremism, and extending peace and prosperity.
- To protect our Nation and honor our values, the United States seeks to extend freedom across the globe by leading an international effort to end tyranny and to promote effective democracy. We will employ the full array of political, economic, diplomatic, and other tools at our disposal.  
Effective democracies:
  - Honor and uphold basic human rights, including freedom of religion, conscience, speech, assembly, association, and press;
  - Are responsive to their citizens, submitting to the will of the people, especially when people vote to change their government;
  - Exercise effective sovereignty and maintain order within their own borders, protect independent and impartial systems of justice, punish crime, embrace the rule of law, and resist corruption; and
  - Limit the reach of government, protecting the institutions of civil society, including the family, religious communities, voluntary associations, private property, independent business, and a market economy.
- Elections are the most visible sign of a free society and can play a critical role in advancing effective democracy. But elections alone are not enough – they must be reinforced by other values, rights, and institutions to bring about lasting freedom. Our goal is human liberty protected by democratic institutions.
- We have a responsibility to promote human freedom. Yet freedom cannot be imposed; it must be chosen. The form that freedom and democracy take in any land will reflect the history, culture, and habits unique to its people.

### ***Strengthen Alliances to Defeat Global Terrorism and Work to Prevent Attacks Against Us and Our Friends***

- We are a nation at war. We have made progress in the war against terror, but we are in a long struggle. America is safer, but not yet safe.
- In the short run, the fight involves using military force and other instruments of national power to kill or capture the terrorists, deny them safe haven or control of any nation, prevent them from

- gaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and cut off their sources of support.
- In the long run, winning the war on terror means winning the battle of ideas, for it is ideas that can turn the disenchanting into murderers willing to kill innocent victims.
  - Terrorists exploit political alienation. Democracy gives people an ownership stake in society.
  - Terrorists exploit grievances that can be blamed on others. Democracy offers the rule of law, the peaceful resolution of disputes, and the habits of advancing interests through compromise.
  - Terrorists exploit sub-cultures of conspiracy and misinformation. Democracy offers freedom of speech, independent media, and the marketplace of ideas.
  - Terrorists exploit an ideology that justifies murder. Democracy offers respect for human dignity.
- The advance of freedom and human dignity through democracy is the long-term solution to the transnational terrorism of today. To create the space and time for that long-term solution to take root, there are four steps we will take in the short term: We will 1) prevent attacks by terrorist networks before they occur; 2) deny WMD to rogue states and to terrorist allies who would use them without hesitation; 3) deny terrorist groups the support and sanctuary of rogue states; and 4) deny the terrorists control of any nation that they would use as a base and launching pad for terror.

### ***Work with Others to Defuse Regional Conflicts***

- If left unaddressed, regional conflicts can lead to failed states, humanitarian disasters, and ungoverned areas that can become safe havens for terrorists. We will work to address regional conflicts at three levels of engagement: conflict prevention and resolution; conflict intervention; and post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.
- Patient efforts to end conflicts should not be mistaken for tolerance of the intolerable.
- Genocide must not be tolerated.

### ***Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)***

- We are committed to keeping the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the world's most dangerous people.
  - The best way to block aspiring nuclear states or nuclear terrorists is to deny them access to the essential ingredient of fissile material.
  - We are countering the spread of biological weapons by improving our capacity to detect and respond to biological attacks, securing dangerous pathogens, and limiting the spread of materials useful for biological weapons.
  - We are working to identify and disrupt terrorist networks that seek chemical weapons capabilities, and we are seeking to deny them access to materials needed to make these weapons.
- If necessary, under long-standing principles of self defense, we do not rule out the use of force before attacks occur. When the consequences of an attack with WMD are potentially so devastating, we cannot afford to stand idly by as grave dangers materialize.

## ***Ignite a New Era of Global Economic Growth through Free Markets and Free Trade***

- We are working to open markets and integrate the global economy through the Doha Development Agenda of the World Trade Organization and through regional and bilateral Free Trade Agreements. To promote energy independence, we are working to open, integrate, and diversify energy markets.
- To ensure stability and growth in the international financial system, we will work to promote growth-oriented economic policies worldwide; encourage adoption of flexible exchange rates and open markets for financial services; strengthen international financial institutions; build local capital markets and the formal economy in the developing world; and create a more transparent, accountable, and secure international financial system.

## ***Expand the Circle of Development by Opening Societies and Building the Infrastructure of Democracy***

- Development reinforces diplomacy and defense, reducing long-term threats to our national security by helping to build stable, prosperous, and peaceful societies. Improving the way we use foreign assistance will make it more effective in strengthening responsible governments, responding to suffering, and improving people's lives.
- Long-term development must include encouraging governments to make wise choices and assisting them in implementing those choices. We will encourage and reward good behavior rather than reinforce negative behavior.

## ***Develop Agendas for Cooperative Action with the Other Centers of Global Power***

- The struggle against militant Islamic radicalism is the great ideological conflict of the early years of the 21st century and finds the great powers all on the same side – opposing the terrorists. This circumstance differs profoundly from the ideological struggles of the 20th century, which saw the great powers divided by ideology as well as by national interest.
- We enjoy unprecedented levels of cooperation with other nations on many of our highest national security priorities.
- Going forward, the NSS describes our strategy for cooperating with partners in critical regions of the world and discusses the freedom agenda as it relates to different regional contexts.

## ***Transform America's National Security Institutions to Meet the Challenges and Opportunities of the 21st Century***

- We have taken a number of steps in the last four years to transform our key national security institutions, including establishing the Department of Homeland Security; launching the most significant reorganization of the Intelligence Community since the 1947 National Security Act; and completing the Department of Defense's 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review. We must extend and enhance the transformation of key institutions, both domestically and abroad.
  - At home, we will sustain the transformation already under way in the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice, including the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Intelligence Community.

- We will continue to reorient the Department of State toward transformational diplomacy, which promotes effective democracy and responsible sovereignty. And we will improve the capacity of agencies to plan, prepare, coordinate, integrate, and execute responses covering the full range of crisis contingencies and long-term challenges.
- Abroad, we will promote meaningful reform of the United Nations to improve its accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness. We will enhance the role of democracies and democracy promotion through international and multilateral institutions. And we will establish results-oriented partnerships to meet new challenges and opportunities.

### ***Engage the Opportunities and Confront the Challenges of Globalization***

- Globalization presents many opportunities. Much of the world's prosperity and improved living standards in recent years derives from the expansion of global trade, investment, information, and technology.
- Globalization has also exposed us to new challenges and changed the way old challenges touch our interests and values, while also greatly enhancing our ability to respond. Examples include public health challenges like pandemics that recognize no borders; illicit trade, whether in drugs, human beings, or sex, that exploits the modern era's greater ease of transport and exchange; and environmental destruction, whether caused by human behavior or cataclysmic mega-disasters such as floods, earthquakes, or tsunamis.
- Effective democracies are better able to deal with these challenges than are repressive or poorly governed states. These challenges require effective democracies to come together in innovative ways.
- The United States will lead the effort to reform existing institutions and create new ones – including forging new partnerships between governmental and nongovernmental actors, and with transnational and international organizations.

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