



THE WHITE HOUSE  
PRESIDENT  
GEORGE W. BUSH

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## Fact Sheet: Winning the Struggle Between Freedom and Terror in the Middle East

-  [President Bush Addresses American Legion National Convention](#)
-  [In Focus: National Security](#)

**Today, President Bush Discussed The Struggle Between Freedom And Terror In The Middle East – Including The Battle In Iraq, The Central Front In The War On Terror.** In the coming days, the President will deliver a series of speeches describing the nature of our enemy in the War on Terror, the insights we have gained about their aims and ambitions, the successes and setbacks we have experienced, and our strategy to prevail. As we approach the fifth anniversary of 9/11, there is a tendency to believe the terrorist threat is receding – that feeling could not be more wrong.

**Our Enemies Come From Different Places And Take Inspiration From Different Sources – But They Form The Outlines Of A Single Worldwide Network Of Radicals.** Some are radicalized followers of the Sunni tradition, who swear allegiance to terrorist organizations like al Qaeda. Others are radicalized followers of the Shia tradition, who join groups like Hezbollah and take guidance from state sponsors like Syria and Iran. Still others are "homegrown" terrorists, who live in free societies they dream to destroy. They are unified by the conviction that free societies threaten their twisted view of Islam.

**American Policy In The Middle East Comes Down To A Straightforward Choice.** We can allow the Middle East to continue on the course it was headed before 9/11 – and a generation from now, our children will face a region dominated by terrorist states and radical dictators armed with nuclear weapons. Or we can rally the world to confront the ideology of hate and give the people of the Middle East a future of hope. That is the choice America has made.

### To Understand The Struggle Unfolding In The Middle East, We Need To Look At The History Of The Region

**For A Half Century, America's Primary Goal In The Middle East Was Stability.** As we fought the Soviet Union in the Cold War, it was important to support Middle Eastern governments that rejected Communism.

**Then The Forces Of Liberty Rose Up, The Berlin Wall Fell, And The Soviet Union Collapsed – But At The Same Time, An Undercurrent Of Danger Was Rising In The Middle East.** The terrorist movement multiplied and resentment boiled over into worldwide violence. Extremists in Iran seized American hostages, Hezbollah terrorists murdered American troops in Beirut and Saudi Arabia,

terrorists set off a truck bomb at the World Trade Center in 1993, and Al Qaeda bombed two U.S. embassies in East Africa and the *USS Cole*.

**On 9/11, We Realized That Years Of Pursuing Stability To Promote Peace Left Us With Neither.** Instead, the lack of freedom made the Middle East an incubator for terrorism. The pre-9/11 status quo was dangerous and unacceptable.

### **The United States Is Pursuing A New Strategy In The Middle East And Around The World**

- 1. America Is On The Offense Against The Terrorists.** We are using every element of national power to confront al Qaeda, those who take inspiration from them, and other terrorists who use similar tactics.
- 2. America Has Made It Clear To All Nations: If You Harbor Terrorists, You Are As Guilty As The Terrorists, You Are An Enemy Of America, And You Will Be Held To Account.**
- 3. America Has Launched A Bold Agenda To Defeat The Enemy's Ideology By Supporting The Forces Of Freedom In The Middle East And Beyond.** Americans believe that all people have the right to determine their destinies, and we know, by history and by logic, that promoting democracy is the surest way to build security.

### **America Has A Clear Strategy To Help The Iraqi People Protect Their New Freedom**

**The Iraqi People Have Reclaimed Their Sovereignty, Voted In Free Elections, Drafted And Approved A Democratic Constitution, And Established A Constitutional Democracy.** At every step along the way, our enemies have failed to break the Iraqi people's courage or stop the rise of Iraqi democracy. Now these enemies hope to plunge Iraq into a civil war.

- Our Commanders And Diplomats On The Ground In Iraq Believe That Iraq Has Not Descended Into Civil War.** Only a small number of Iraqis are engaged in sectarian violence, while the overwhelming majority want peace and a normal life in a unified country.

**On The Political Side, We Are Working Closely With Prime Minister Maliki To Strengthen Iraq's Unity Government And Deliver Better Services To The Iraqi People.**

**On The Security Side, We Are Refining Our Tactics To Meet Threats On The Ground.** Five of Iraq's 10 Army divisions are taking the lead in their operation areas, and the initial results of the new Baghdad Security Plan are encouraging.

### **The Battle For Iraq Is Central To The Ideological Struggle Between Freedom And Terror**

**Some Politicians See Iraq As A Diversion From The War On Terror – But Osama Bin Laden Has Proclaimed That The "Third World War ... Is Raging" In Iraq.** Ayman al Zawahiri has called the struggle in Iraq "the place for the greatest battle," and terrorists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt,

Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and elsewhere have come to Iraq to fight democracy.

**If America Were To Pull Out Before Iraq Can Defend Itself, We Would Be Handing Iraq Over To Our Worst Enemies – Al Qaeda Terrorists, Saddam's Former Henchmen, And Armed Groups With Ties To Iran.** These groups would have a sanctuary to recruit and train terrorists at the heart of the Middle East, with huge oil riches to fund their ambitions.

**If We Give Up The Fight In The Streets Of Baghdad, We Will Face The Terrorists In The Streets Of Our Own Cities.**

**Victory In Iraq Will Be Difficult And Will Require More Sacrifice, But We Will Not Leave Until We Have Finished The Job.** Victory in Iraq will result in a democracy that is a friend of America and an ally in the War on Terror.

### **The World Faces A Grave Threat From The Radical Regime In Iran**

**This Summer's Crisis In Lebanon Has Made It Clearer Than Ever That The World Faces A Grave Threat From The Radical Regime In Iran.** The Iranian regime arms, funds, and advises Hezbollah, which has killed more Americans than any terrorist network except al Qaeda. It interferes extensively in Iraq, denies basic human rights to millions of its people, and is pursuing nuclear weapons in open defiance of its international obligations. We know the death and suffering that Iran's sponsorship of terrorists has brought, and we can imagine how much worse it would be if Iran were allowed to acquire nuclear weapons.

**Many Nations Are Working Together To Solve This Problem.** The UN has passed a resolution demanding Iran suspend its nuclear enrichment activities.

**Today Is The Deadline For Iran's Leaders To Reply To The Reasonable Proposal The International Community Has Made, Yet So Far They Have Responded With Further Defiance And Delay.** We'll continue working closely with our allies to find a diplomatic solution, but there must be consequences for Iran's defiance, and we must not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon.

### **The Future Of Afghanistan Belongs To Freedom**

**Within Weeks After 9/11, American Forces In Afghanistan Captured Or Killed Hundreds Of Al Qaeda And Taliban Fighters, And Today, Afghanistan Has A Free And Democratic Government.** Taliban and Al Qaeda elements are attacking Afghanistan's institutions, but they will not derail democracy and freedom. Forces from 40 nations, including every member of NATO, are now serving alongside U.S. troops to bolster the new Afghan government.

### **Foreign Forces And Terrorists Have No Place In A Free And Democratic Lebanon**

**We Worked To Enforce A UN Resolution That Required Syria To End Its Occupation Of Lebanon – Then Our Enemies Set Out To Destabilize The Young Democracy.**

- **When Hezbollah Launched An Unprovoked Attack On Israel That Undermined The Democratic Government In Beirut, The World United To Support Lebanon's Democracy.** Secretary Rice worked with the Security Council to pass Resolution 1701, which will strengthen Lebanese forces as they retake southern Lebanon and stop Hezbollah from acting as a state within a state. The President appreciates the troops pledged by France, Italy, and other allies.

**We Are Employing The Full Array Of Tools At Our Disposal To End Tyranny And Promote Effective Democracy In The Middle East.** We are speaking out against abuses of human rights by undemocratic governments in the region, publicly supporting democratic reformers in repressive nations, and using foreign assistance to support the development of free and fair elections, rule of law, civil society, human rights, women's rights, free media, and religious freedom.

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