



THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

[Home](#) > [News & Policies](#) > [August 2004](#)

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 16, 2004

Fact Sheet: Making America More Secure by Transforming Our Military

"Over the coming decade, we will deploy a more agile and more flexible force, which means that more of our troops will be stationed and deployed from here at home. We will move some of our troops and capabilities to new locations, so they can surge quickly to deal with unexpected threats. We'll take advantage of 21st century military technologies to rapidly deploy increased combat power. The new plan will help us fight and win these wars of the 21st century. It will strengthen our alliances around the world, while we build new partnerships to better preserve the peace. It will reduce the stress on our troops and our military families."

President George W. Bush
August 16, 2004

Today's Presidential Action

- President Bush today announced the most comprehensive restructuring of U.S. military forces overseas since the end of the Korean War. By closing bases no longer needed to meet Cold War threats that have ended, this new initiative will bring home many Cold War-era forces while deploying more flexible and rapidly deployable capabilities in strategic locations around the world.
- Taking advantage of 21st century military technologies, the plan will increase U.S. military capabilities and combat power in every part of the world; improve our cooperation with, and our ability to defend, allies; and strengthen our ability to deter aggression -- all while reducing the number of U.S. forces stationed at overseas bases.
- The plan will make America safer by better preparing our military to address the new dangers associated with rogue nations, global terrorism, and weapons of mass destruction.
- Over the next ten years, the President's plan will close hundreds of U.S. facilities overseas and bring home about 60,000 to 70,000 uniformed personnel and approximately 100,000 family members and civilian employees.
- The plan will give our service members more time on the home front and fewer moves over a career. It will give military spouses fewer job changes and offer greater stability for their families. And it will save the taxpayers money, by closing hundreds of unneeded facilities around the world.

Goals of Our Plan for a 21st Century Military

- **Expand U.S. defense relationships with allies and build new partnerships.** Posture changes will increase our ability to carry out our defense commitments more effectively. The U.S. presence will be tailored to optimally balance our 21st century military requirements, our relationships with allies and partners, local conditions, and the impact of a U.S. presence on host nations.

- **Develop flexibility to contend with uncertainty.** Global threats to our national security can defy prediction. Therefore, the United States will develop new and expanded security relationships to emphasize flexibility in force posture.
- **Provide for both a regional and global forward presence.** The demands of new threats require forces deployed overseas to be ready for missions anywhere in the world, regardless of where the forces are based -- while we must be prepared to act regionally and locally and to maintain our commitments to NATO and other allies.
- **Enable rapid power projection.** Our overseas force realignment must improve rapid response capabilities for distant contingencies, because our forces will not likely fight where they are stationed. This requires an updated transport infrastructure to facilitate movement of forces, prepositioned equipment along transport routes, and lean command structures for deployable operations.
- **Focus on capabilities instead of numbers.** Leveraging U.S. advantages in speed, reach, precision, knowledge, and combat power is now the defining concept for military action. The number of forward-based forces in a given area is no longer an accurate representation of the effective military capability that the U.S. can bring to bear.

Background

Our military global posture, developed to defend against Cold War adversaries, is not optimized to meet today's threats to our national security. Following World War II and the Korean War, our global posture focused on threats to specific regions and tailored our military presence to those regions. Our Cold War posture was established with the certainty that we knew our adversaries and where potential battles would be fought. But with the demise of the Soviet Union, once-familiar threats gave way to less predictable dangers. The lessons of the last 15 years teach us that we often send our forces to unpredictable places. The Cold War strategy of placing heavy forces in specific locations to defend against a known adversary needs to be changed to more effectively deal with today's threats.

It is no longer relevant to measure America's war-fighting capability by the number of troops and equipment in a particular country or region. During the 1990s, our military began a transformation from the industrial age to the information age. In this age, reach, stealth, precision, knowledge, and combat power, and not just the size of forces, allow us to dominate the battlespace. We learned that small, highly trained and networked units, platforms, and even individual warriors can have an effect on the battlefield that was previously reserved for much larger formations. Today, one high-tech ship or tank or aircraft can deliver the same combat power that once required ten ships or tanks or aircraft.

The Bush Administration is working to transform our forces to more effectively confront the dangers of the 21st century and better protect America and our vital interests. Early in 2001, the Bush Administration adopted a new defense strategy that recognized the changing nature of warfare and the need for the Department of Defense to transform its institutions, its way of doing business, and its structures, both within the United States and abroad, in order to meet the challenges of the new era.

The 9/11 attacks magnified the new era of uncertainty that the Administration had previously recognized and had begun to prepare for in the 2001 defense strategy. Operations in Afghanistan -- and the global war on terror more broadly -- brought to the forefront the need to conduct a strategy-based review of our global defense posture. That review, conducted in close consultation with Congress and our allies, has served as the cornerstone of the President's defense transformation agenda.

Outline of Changes

Europe: Our efforts will support NATO's own transformation. We aim to eliminate Cold War infrastructures that are no longer relevant to today's security needs, replacing them with more flexible, deployable forces and headquarters. Our future posture will contain forward forces that are rapidly deployable for early entry into conflict both in Europe and beyond.

- Heavy forces designed for a land war in Europe will return to the U.S.; they will be replaced by advanced, deployable capabilities and airborne units, supported by advanced training facilities and high-capacity mobility infrastructure.
- Ground, air, and naval headquarters will be streamlined and consolidated.
- Special forces, both forward-stationed and rotational, will increase in importance; they will be positioned for ease of movement both within and outside of Europe.

The Middle East Region: Cooperation and access provided by coalition partners during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom provide us with a solid basis for other forms of future cooperation.

- We will maintain, and in some cases upgrade, sites for rotational forces and contingency purposes, supported by forward headquarters and advanced training facilities.
- Rotational air, ground, and sea forces will provide presence, and assurance to our allies and partners, without permanence.
- While we desire close relationships with Afghanistan and Iraq that will allow us to continue to play a positive role in their rebuilding efforts and in long-term regional security, any decision on long-term U.S. presence in these countries is a sovereign choice for their people and governments.

Asia: We will improve our ability to deter, dissuade, and defeat challenges in Asia through strengthened long-range strike capabilities, streamlined and consolidated headquarters, and a network of access arrangements.

- The forward stationing of additional expeditionary maritime capabilities in the Pacific will enable prompt and effective military action both regionally and globally.
- Advanced strike assets will be stationed in the Western Pacific.
- In Northeast Asia we are working with our strongest allies to restructure our military presence and command structures while simultaneously improving capabilities in the region.
- In Central and Southeast Asia we are working to establish a network of sites to provide training opportunities and contingency access both for conventional and special forces.

Africa and Latin America: We will expand our cooperative security relationships in Latin America and Africa to help partners meet the challenges they face.

- We will enhance regional training, assist partners in building capacity for counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics, and maintain contingency access for remote areas.
- We have no plans for Main Operating Bases in these regions.

###