



JOIN THE CAMPAIGN TO CHANGE AMERICA

A New Strategy Against Terrorism

Pace University, New York, NY
September 7, 2007

Thank you for having me here today. Thank you.

On a beautiful, bright September day almost six years ago, a group of 19 men stepped onto four airplanes, intending to kill as many people as they could, intending to terrorize America. Just a few blocks from here, the hijackers crashed their terrible ideology into the American dream.

Nearly 3,000 Americans died on that horrible day in New York City, in Arlington, Virginia, and in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. They were bankers and busboys, secretaries and firemen, and they were all our brothers and sisters.

Their sacrifice is a harsh and lasting reminder of what must become one of the great goals of our generation—the need to protect our citizens from these horrors, to root out and shut down terrorist cells wherever they fester, to remove the poverty and instability that give radicalism a toehold, and to make terrorism utterly unacceptable among nations everywhere, for all time.

In August of 2001, while George Bush was in Crawford ignoring memos about the threat from Al Qaeda, I authored an op-ed in which I named terrorism as the most vital national security challenge our country would face in the coming years. I still believe that today.

The world stood united behind America after 9/11. But instead of leading a truly visionary campaign against global terrorism, our president led America down a garden path. He used the attacks to justify a preconceived war against a nation he now admits had no ties to Al Qaeda. He then offered belligerence and hostility to the world community, and we have been rewarded in kind.

President Bush, like the Republicans following him today and even some Democrats, was stuck in the past, and he still is. He had no grasp of the new threats we faced, so he failed to offer a vision to keep us safe in a world that had changed. Saddam Hussein was the threat he knew, so Iraq was the war he waged.

We needed new thinking and a bold vision to protect the world for our children; instead, George Bush literally gave us his father's war—but without his father's allies or his father's sense of decency. What's more and what's worse, the so-called "war on terror" he used as his excuse for war in Iraq became his excuse for trampling our Constitution and, most perversely, for ignoring the demands of the actual struggle against terrorism. Because in George Bush's reality, disagreement is called weak, challenge is suspect, and opposition downright unpatriotic.

Six years later, the devastating consequences of the Bush "war on terror" doctrine are so clear that his own Administration has had to admit them.

A recent National Intelligence Estimate found that Al Qaeda is now as strong as it was before 9/11. In a recent survey of America's most respected foreign policy experts, the vast majority said the world is becoming more dangerous for Americans and the United States. The State Department recently released a study showing that terrorism has increased worldwide 25 percent in 2006, including a 40 percent surge in civilian fatalities.

And as everyone here knows, Osama bin Laden is still at large. Six years ago, President Bush declared that he wanted bin Laden "dead or alive." This is his starkest failure. Apparently, bin Laden plans to address America on the anniversary of 9/11. But I don't need to wait and hear what this murderer has to say. My position is clear. I can make you this solemn promise: as president, I will never rest until we have hunted bin Laden down and served him justice.

George Bush's approach to terrorism has not only failed to make the world safer. It has demolished the foundation of America's foreign policy: our relationships with other

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countries. In the first Gulf War, our allies shared the cost of troops, casualties, and funding. But in the current Iraq War, the Bush approach left us largely on our own, bearing almost all of the burden.

Tragically for America and the world, George Bush's "war on terror" approach walked directly into the trap the terrorists set for us. Islamic extremists wanted to frame the conflict with the U.S. as a war of civilizations, and the Bush Administration, stuck in a Cold War mentality, happily complied.

There is now only one key question we must ask ourselves: are we any closer to getting rid of terrorism than we were six years ago? And the terrible answer is no, we're further away. Today, terrorism is worse in Iraq, and it's worse around the world. So what does all this mean? It means the results are in on George Bush's so-called "global war on terror" and it's not just a failure, it's a double-edged failure.

The Bush approach hasn't only made the terror problem worse. The Administration has rigidly stuck to outdated approaches that are ineffective against the modern terrorist threat. We need a counterterrorism policy that will actually counter terrorism. That matches 21st century threats with 21st century tactics. That replaces Cold War thinking designed to defeat a single, implacable enemy with new world thinking that can defeat a multi-national, diverse, and often hidden foe—not just now, but for the long-term. That's strong, fast, and hard enough to stop terrorists cold, but also smart, honest, and prescient enough to draw people away from terrorism in the first place.

And to do all of this, we must do one thing. We've got to throw away the failed George Bush policies of the past, and move in a bold new direction.

Instead of Cold War institutions designed to win traditional wars and protect traditional borders, we need new institutions designed to share intelligence, cooperate across borders, and take out small, hostile groups.

Instead of a foreign policy of convenience that readily does business with whoever is available and regularly turns a blind eye when our allies behave wrongly or fail to cooperate, we need a new foreign policy of conviction that requires cooperation in exchange for our support, whether it's arms sales, trade, or foreign aid.

Instead of an exclusively short-term focus on the enemy we know, we need a long-term strategy to win the minds of those who are not yet our enemies, by offering education, democracy, and opportunity in place of radicalism, hatred and fear.

Most of all, instead of a reckless, solo pursuit of an ideological agenda that abandons our moral authority and disregards our allies, we need to reengage with the world and reassert our moral leadership.

In a few short days, we will all take time to remember 9/11. This year, we should all make the anniversary not only a time of mourning, but of reflection on the very real choices we face.

We learned on 9/11 the consequences of not dealing with the threat of terrorism. You will have a very real choice to make in this election, and the choice will have consequences. You and your children will have to live with the decisions we make in the next four years.

There is no doubt that some progress has been made. We should thank the professionals who have uncovered plots like the one on John F. Kennedy Airport. Our federal government has been substantially rearranged, and many problems corrected.

But we should not let our enthusiasm for short-term victories cloud the long-term reality. The fact is that George Bush has used 20th century tools to attack 21st century problems. The Bush approach has failed not only because of the shameless political manipulations and reckless decisions of the president and his aides. It has failed because the president is using an antiquated set of weapons against a modern target, and he's misfiring.

Some politicians, like Rudolph Giuliani, Mitt Romney, and John McCain have responded to the shortcomings and backfires of the Administration's approach by essentially doubling-down. They have closed their eyes to the facts and asked us to accept, on faith, more of the Bush approach. Some running for the Democratic nomination have even argued that the Bush-Cheney approach has made us safer. It has not.

For the sake of our nation's security, for the sake of building a safer America, we must take a new direction.

We need a bold new approach—one that is smart, tough, and targeted. This will require us to look beyond the structures of World War II and the Cold War to new tools that will allow us to target terrorism more precisely. It will require sustained U.S. leadership—but the kind that leverages the power of partnerships, rather than going it alone. It will mean raising the level of cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence agencies—while preserving civil liberties and the rule of law.

We saw the promise of a new multilateral approach just a couple of days ago in Germany.

Education Roundtable

Oct 23, 2007
Merrimack, N.H.

Community Meeting with John Edwards

Oct 24, 2007
Glenwood, Iowa

Community Meeting with John Edwards

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Community Meeting with John Edwards

Oct 24, 2007
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NEWS HEADLINES

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The terrorists the German authorities caught were plotting massive attacks on American interests. They had been trained in Pakistan, had a network in Turkey, and were captured through German and American intelligence. We must be able to coordinate similar operations throughout the world—in the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and anywhere terrorists would attack.

Now more than ever, the world is ready for a new direction from America. The world is ready to work together against terrorism. But right now, the community of nations lacks any global institution to coordinate counter-terrorist intelligence and security operations. The international institutions of the last century were designed for World War II and the Cold War. Institutions like the United Nations, NATO, and Interpol have taken steps to adapt to the twenty-first century challenge of terrorism, and they serve valuable purposes. And they remain essential to fulfilling our interests. But they cannot be the complete and final answer to shutting down global terrorism.

It's the right time for a bold new direction.

As president, I will launch a comprehensive new counterterrorism policy that will be defined by two principles—strength and cooperation.

The centerpiece of this policy will be a new multilateral organization called the Counterterrorism and Intelligence Treaty Organization (CITO).

Every nation has an interest in shutting down terrorism. CITO will create connections between a wide range of nations on terrorism and intelligence, including countries on all continents, including Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe. New connections between previously separate nations will be forged, creating new possibilities.

CITO will allow members to voluntarily share financial, police, customs and immigration intelligence. Together, nations will be able to track the way terrorists travel, communicate, recruit, train, and finance their operations. And they will be able to take action, through international teams of intelligence and national security professionals who will launch targeted missions to root out and shut down terrorist cells.

The new organization will also create a historic new coalition. Those nations who join will, by working together, show the world the power of cooperation. Those nations who join will also be required to commit to tough criteria about the steps they will take to root out extremists, particularly those who cross borders. Those nations who refuse to join will be called out before the world.

It's important to note that CITO is not a panacea, nor will it be perfect. But it would represent the first step in a new direction. As President John F. Kennedy observed when he signed the treaty that first limited the testing of nuclear weapons, we must begin with the common recognition of a common danger. President Kennedy said then, "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." Today, this new anti-terrorism organization would be such a first step.

Organizations are only as strong as the people who help make them run, and so we must also improve the quality of our human intelligence—agents better able to understand local culture and make local connections in countries with active terrorist cells. As president, I will lead efforts to improve human intelligence through 1,000 new annual scholarships to improve language skills for students who pursue careers in intelligence and diplomacy.

A terrorist should not be able to escape detection in Europe or the Middle East if a foreign agency could have caught him with the help of American technology and advice. Within six months of taking office, I will direct the Secretary of State, working with the Attorney General and other national security officials, to launch comprehensive strategies to support agencies in other countries.

There is no more urgent task than preventing terrorists from acquiring a nuclear weapon or another weapon of mass destruction. And we will all be better off when the world is free of nuclear weapons.

Diplomacy is key to progress against nuclear weapons. The recent agreement with North Korea to shut down their nuclear programs in exchange for the release of frozen assets is long overdue, but encouraging. It is telling that the few successes of the Bush Administration come from the diplomacy it has derided.

As president, I will create a Global Nuclear Compact to strengthen the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which would support peaceful nuclear programs, improve security for existing stocks of nuclear materials, and ensure more frequent verification that materials are not being diverted and facilities are not being misused. And I will lead an international effort to rid the world of nuclear weapons.

Our chemical plants are also targets for terrorists. A successful attack on any of these targets would be devastating. Because of industry pressure, new watered-down security rules imposed by the Bush Administration may actually weaken security at many chemical plants. I support implementing tough new safety standards at plants vulnerable to

terrorist attacks.

We must also work hard here at home to ensure that extremist ideologies do not take hold in our own Muslim communities—and we must do so in a way that respects diversity and civil liberties and avoids practices like racial profiling against both Arabs and Muslims. We must encourage American Muslim participation in public life. I will put new resources toward engaging American Muslims, empowering local mosques to counter extremist ideas, and working hand-in-hand with Muslim communities to identify and isolate threats.

Finally, we must achieve energy independence. If we reduce our reliance on oil from instable parts of the world, Middle Eastern regimes will finally diversify their economies and modernize their societies. And fighting global climate change will reduce global disruptions that could lead to tens of millions of refugees and create massive new breeding grounds for desperation and radicalism.

There are those who are hard-core proponents of terror, and I have spoken here about how we must deal with them.

Yet we also should have a broader, deeper goal—to prevent terrorism from taking root in the first place. Millions of people around the world are sitting on the fence. On the one side are bin Laden and Al Qaeda, and on the other side is America. The question is which way they will go. If they perceive America as a bully, it will drive them in the other direction. If, on the other hand, they see us as the light, the country they want to be like, the country that's creating hope and opportunity, it will pull them to us like a magnet.

We have to be that light again. We need to do everything we can to prevent this generation of potential friends from becoming a generation of enemies.

Several months ago, I proposed a sweeping effort to eliminate the poverty and instability that create the conditions for extremism, including increasing our funding for global primary education to \$3 billion a year, expanded microfinance programs, ramping up our support for sanitation and preventive health care in developing nations, and dramatically increasing our promotion of constitutional democracies and the rule of law across the developing world.

And during my first year in office, I will establish a "Marshall Corps," patterned after the military reserves, that will include at least 10,000 civilian experts. Its members will be deployed abroad to serve on reconstruction, stabilization, and humanitarian missions.

Rethinking our approach to terrorism also means rethinking our approach country by country, cell by cell. And in each place where terrorism has taken root, there is a lot more we can do.

We must begin with one of the greatest generators of terrorism in the world today: Iraq. George Bush's failed management of the war in Iraq has made the problem of terrorism worse. The war provided Al Qaeda with a powerful tool for recruiting terrorists. It gave them a battlefield for training. It gave them an attractive target, in American troops. And it diverted the resources of the U.S. military, weakening our force structure in the process.

Even though the presence of U.S. troops has served as an attractive target for terrorists, our eventual withdrawal will not remove the threat. As president, I will redeploy troops into Quick Reaction Forces outside of Iraq, to perform targeted missions against Al Qaeda cells and to prevent a genocide or regional spillover of a civil war.

We can neglect the crisis in Afghanistan no longer. The Taliban is re-taking territory in southern Afghanistan and kidnapping foreigners. As president, I will work with the other members of NATO to ensure that our forces and rules of engagement are robust enough to defeat the Taliban and protect the democratic government in Afghanistan. As part of this effort, I will commit additional American Special Forces to root out and shut down Taliban cells.

Terrorists also take advantage when states don't do enough to stop them. We ought to use our tremendous tools—whether diplomacy, arms sales, trade, or foreign aid—to get states to shut down terrorism. In Pakistan, the recent National Intelligence Estimate found that Al Qaeda has established a safe haven in the northwest tribal areas. We have given the Musharraf government billions of dollars of aid in the last several years, yet they have done far too little to get control over these areas. As president, I will condition future American aid on progress by Pakistan, including strengthening the reach of police forces and working more effectively with tribal leaders and their members to ensure their acceptance of the government. But I want to be clear about one thing: if we have actionable intelligence about imminent terrorist activity and the Pakistan government refuses to act, we will.

And Saudi Arabia is a country we have given too much in return for too little. We must require the Saudis to do more to stop the flow of terrorists to Iraq. As president, I will condition future arms packages on Saudi Arabia's actions against terrorists.

Finally, you may be asking yourself why I am delivering this speech at a college, instead of

a think tank—why I am talking to a room full of young people, instead of a room full policy experts.

The answer is simple.

I have spoken of the need to counter 21st century threats with 21st century strategies. To do that, we need 21st century minds. And that means we need you.

Your country needs you. You may not agree with the decisions that got us to where we are today. You may not agree with the policies George Bush is currently pursuing. Everyone in this room knows that I certainly do not.

But we are in this struggle. We are in it together—and America needs you now more than ever.

While the Bush administration used this struggle to divide us, I am asking you to rise to the challenges we face today. To sacrifice. To make a meaningful contribution to our national effort.

It's time to be patriotic about something other than war.

Your country needs your help. Your country needs you to contribute to this effort in ways big and small.

You can dedicate your life to this cause by joining our armed forces or an intelligence agency, to help establish and execute the plan I have laid out here today.

You can join the Marshall Corps that I have proposed, to represent America abroad and help alleviate the poverty that provides the breeding ground for terror.

You can take the lead in bridging the cultural divide by learning to speak Arabic or another foreign language.

You can work or volunteer for an NGO that fights global poverty.

Or you can write and talk to your elected representatives to keep them honest and make sure they are supporting smart policies that will help us end the war in Iraq.

It is these sacrifices that will help restore America's greatness. We must lead the world toward the future, and we must take up the mantle of moral leadership that served us so well in the last century.

The campaign against terrorism will demand toughness and creativity. It will take place in the shadows, in difficult terrain like the hills of Pakistan and the fields of Afghanistan, and in the hearts and minds of millions.

We have a choice today, and it rests in your hands. You are the generation who will help decide whether America will stick with the failed policies of the past, or whether we will aim for the horizon.

Every generation of Americans has faced grave challenges. We have overcome great foes in the past, and we will do so again—in the last century, we closed the chapters on Nazism, Fascism, and Communism through courage, bold new ideas, and strength.

Today, we stand on the shoulders of the generations who faced those challenges in their own time, and who rose to meet them.

Just as they rose to meet the enemies they faced, we must rise to meet ours.

And just as they did, we rise to meet them as Americans.

So challenge your leaders—hold them accountable for creating a safer world. And challenge yourselves—hold yourself accountable for creating a better nation. That is what it means to be American. To reach, to keep on reaching, to never, ever stop reaching for the best that any nation can ever be.

Do we have the vision to imagine a better world? Of course we do. Do we have the strength to protect our people? Of course we do. And do we have the guts to say, we know that this struggle is not just about our future, it is about your future, wherever you live, whoever you are? Of course we do.

Robert F. Kennedy once said that each time we stand up for an idea, we send forth a tiny ripple of hope, and that, together, those ripples can build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.

You can create that current, and you can start today. This is America, after all. We are more than a place. We are an idea. An idea that has changed the world and will change it again and again. We are freedom, equality and respect. A beacon once lit that can never be put out.

We are America, and the future is ours if we have the courage to make it so.

Thank you, and God Bless America.

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