

A BALANCE OF POWER THAT FAVORS FREEDOM

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“President Bush’s new National Security Strategy offers a bold vision for protecting our nation that captures today’s new realities and new opportunities,” says National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice. “It calls on America to use our position of unparalleled strength and influence to create a balance of power that favors freedom. As the president says in the cover letter: we seek to create the ‘conditions in which all nations and all societies can chose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty’.”

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The fall of the Berlin Wall and the fall of the World Trade Center were the bookends of a long transition period. During that period those of us who think about foreign policy for a living searched for an overarching, explanatory theory or framework that would describe the new threats and the proper response to them. Some said that nations and their militaries were no longer relevant, only global markets knitted together by new technologies. Others foresaw a future dominated by ethnic conflict. And some even thought that in the future the primary energies of America’s armed forces would be devoted to managing civil conflict and humanitarian assistance.

It will take years to understand the long-term effects of September 11th [2001]. But there are certain verities that the tragedy brought home to us in the most vivid way.

Perhaps most fundamentally, 9/11 crystallized our vulnerability. It also threw into sharp relief the nature of the threats we face today. Today’s threats come less from massing armies than from small, shadowy bands of terrorists — less from strong states than from weak or failed states. And after 9/11, there is no longer any doubt that today America faces an existential threat to our security — a threat as great as any we faced during the Civil War, the so-called “Good War,” or the Cold War.

President Bush’s new National Security Strategy offers a bold vision for protecting our nation that captures today’s new realities and new opportunities.

It calls on America to use our position of unparalleled strength and influence to create a balance of power that favors freedom. As the president says in the cover letter: we seek to create the “conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty.”

This strategy has three pillars:

- We will defend the peace by opposing and preventing violence by terrorists and outlaw regimes.
- We will preserve the peace by fostering an era of good relations among the world’s great powers.
- And we will extend the peace by seeking to extend the benefits of freedom and prosperity across the globe.

Defending our nation from its enemies is the first and fundamental commitment of the federal government. And the United States has a special responsibility to help make the world more secure.

In fighting global terror, we will work with coalition partners on every continent, using every tool in our arsenal — from diplomacy and better defenses to law enforcement, intelligence, cutting off terrorist financing, and, if needed, military power.

We will break up terror networks, hold to account nations that harbor terrorists, and confront aggressive tyrants holding or seeking nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons that might be passed to terrorist allies. These are different faces of the same evil. Terrorists need a place to plot, train, and organize. Tyrants allied with terrorists can greatly extend the reach of their deadly mischief. Terrorists allied with tyrants can acquire technologies allowing them to murder on an ever more massive scale. Each threat magnifies the danger of the other. And the only path to safety is to effectively confront both terrorists and tyrants.

For these reasons, President Bush is committed to confronting the Iraqi regime, which has defied the just demands of the world for over a decade. We are on notice. The danger from Saddam Hussein's arsenal is far more clear than anything we could have foreseen prior to September 11th. And history will judge harshly any leader or nation that saw this dark cloud and sat by in complacency or indecision.

The Iraqi regime's violation of every condition set forth by the U.N. Security Council for the 1991 cease-fire fully justifies — legally and morally — the enforcement of those conditions.

It is also true that since 9/11, our nation is properly focused as never before on preventing attacks against us before they happen.

The National Security Strategy does not overturn five decades of doctrine and jettison either containment or deterrence. These strategic concepts can and will continue to be employed where appropriate. But some threats are so potentially catastrophic — and can arrive with so little warning, by means that are untraceable — that they cannot be contained. Extremists who seem to view suicide as a sacrament are unlikely to ever be deterred. And new technology requires new thinking about when a threat actually becomes "imminent." So as a matter of common

sense, the United States must be prepared to take action, when necessary, before threats have fully materialized.

Preemption is not a new concept. There has never been a moral or legal requirement that a country wait to be attacked before it can address existential threats. As George Shultz recently wrote, "If there is a rattlesnake in the yard, you don't wait for it to strike before you take action in self-defense." The United States has long affirmed the right to anticipatory self-defense — from the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 to the crisis on the Korean peninsula in 1994.

But this approach must be treated with great caution. The number of cases in which it might be justified will always be small. It does not give a green light — to the United States or any other nation — to act first without exhausting other means, including diplomacy. Preemptive action does not come at the beginning of a long chain of effort. The threat must be very grave. And the risks of waiting must far outweigh the risks of action.

To support all these means of defending the peace, the United States will build and maintain 21st century military forces that are beyond challenge.

We will seek to dissuade any potential adversary from pursuing a military build-up in the hope of surpassing, or equaling, the power of the United States and our allies.

Some have criticized this frankness as impolitic. But surely clarity is a virtue here. Dissuading military competition can prevent potential conflict and costly global arms races. And the United States invites — indeed, we exhort — our freedom loving allies, such as those in Europe, to increase their military capabilities.

The burden of maintaining a balance of power that favors freedom should be shouldered by all nations that favor freedom. What none of us should want is the emergence of a militarily powerful adversary who does not share our common values.

Thankfully, this possibility seems more remote today than at any point in our lifetimes. We have an

historic opportunity to break the destructive pattern of great power rivalry that has bedeviled the world since the rise of the nation-state in the 17th century. Today, the world's great centers of power are united by common interests, common dangers, and — increasingly — common values. The United States will make this a key strategy for preserving the peace for many decades to come.

There is an old argument between the so-called “realistic” school of foreign affairs and the “idealistic” school. To oversimplify, realists downplay the importance of values and the internal structures of states, emphasizing instead the balance of power as the key to stability and peace. Idealists emphasize the primacy of values, such as freedom and democracy and human rights in ensuring that just political order is obtained. As a professor, I recognize that this debate has won tenure for and sustained the careers of many generations of scholars. As a policymaker, I can tell you that these categories obscure reality.

In real life, power and values are married completely. Power matters in the conduct of world affairs. Great powers matter a great deal — they have the ability to influence the lives of millions and change history. And the values of great powers matter as well. If the Soviet Union had won the Cold War, the world would look very different today — Germany today might look like the old German Democratic Republic, or Latin America like Cuba.

Today, there is an increasing awareness — on every continent — of a paradigm of progress, founded on political and economic liberty. The United States, our NATO allies, our neighbors in the Western Hemisphere, Japan, and our other friends and allies in Asia and Africa all share a broad commitment to democracy, the rule of law, a market-based economy, and open trade.

In addition, since September 11th all the world's great powers see themselves as falling on the same side of a profound divide between the forces of chaos and order, and they are acting accordingly.

America and Europe have long shared a commitment to liberty. We also now understand that being the

target of trained killers is a powerful tonic that makes disputes over other important issues look like the policy differences they are, instead of fundamental clashes of values.

The United States is also cooperating with India across a range of issues — even as we work closely with Pakistan.

Russia is an important partner in the war on terror and is reaching toward a future of greater democracy and economic freedom. As it does so, our relationship will continue to broaden and deepen. The passing of the ABM [1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile] Treaty and the signing of the Moscow Treaty reducing strategic arms by two-thirds make clear that the days of Russian military confrontation with the West are over.

China and the United States are cooperating on issues ranging from the fight against terror to maintaining stability on the Korean peninsula. And China's transition continues. Admittedly, in some areas, its leaders still follow practices that are abhorrent. Yet China's leaders have said that their main goal is to raise living standards for the Chinese people. They will find that reaching that goal in today's world will depend more on developing China's human capital than it will on China's natural resources or territorial possessions.

And as China's populace become more educated, more free to think, and more entrepreneurial, we believe this will inevitably lead to greater political freedom. You cannot expect people to think on the job, but not at home.

This confluence of common interests and increasingly common values creates a moment of enormous opportunities. Instead of repeating the historic pattern where great power rivalry exacerbates local conflicts, we can use great power cooperation to solve conflicts, from the Middle East to Kashmir, Congo, and beyond. Great power cooperation also creates an opportunity for multilateral institutions — such as the U.N., NATO, and the WTO [World Trade Organization] — to prove their worth. That's the challenge set forth by the president to the U.N. concerning Iraq. And great power cooperation can be

the basis for moving forward on problems that require multilateral solutions — from terror to the environment.

To build a balance of power that favors freedom, we must also extend the peace by extending the benefits of liberty and prosperity as broadly as possible. As the president has said, we have a responsibility to build a world that is not only safer, but better.

The United States will fight poverty, disease, and oppression because it is the right thing to do — and the smart thing to do. We have seen how poor states can become weak or even failed states, vulnerable to hijacking by terrorist networks — with potentially catastrophic consequences. And in societies where legal avenues for political dissent are stifled, the temptation to speak through violence grows.

We will lead efforts to build a global trading system that is growing and more free. Here in our own hemisphere, for example, we are committed to completing a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005. We are also starting negotiations on a free trade agreement with the Southern African Customs Union. Expanding trade is essential to the development efforts of poor nations and to the economic health of all nations.

We will continue to lead the world in efforts to combat HIV/AIDS — a pandemic which challenges our humanity and threatens whole societies.

We will seek to bring every nation into an expanding circle of development. Earlier this year the president proposed a 50 percent increase in U.S. development assistance. But he also made clear that new money means new terms. The new resources will only be available to countries that work to govern justly, invest in the health and education of their people, and encourage economic liberty.

We know from experience that corruption, bad policies, and bad practices can make aid money worse than useless. In such environments, aid props up bad policy, chasing out investment and perpetuating misery. Good policy, on the other hand,

attracts private capital and expands trade. In a sound policy environment, development aid is a catalyst, not a crutch.

At the core of America's foreign policy is our resolve to stand on the side of men and women in every nation who stand for what the president has called the "non-negotiable demands of human dignity" — free speech, equal justice, respect for women, religious tolerance, and limits on the power of the state.

These principles are universal — and President Bush has made them part of the debate in regions where many thought that merely to raise them was imprudent or impossible.

From Cairo and Ramallah to Tehran and Tashkent, the president has made clear that values must be a vital part of our relationships with other countries. In our development aid, our diplomacy, our international broadcasting, and in our educational assistance, the United States will promote moderation, tolerance, and human rights. And we look forward to one day standing for these aspirations in a free and unified Iraq.

We reject the condescending view that freedom will not grow in the soil of the Middle East — or that Muslims somehow do not share in the desire to be free. The celebrations we saw on the streets of Kabul last year proved otherwise. And in a recent U.N. report, a panel of 30 Arab intellectuals recognized that for their nations to fully join in the progress of our times will require greater political and economic freedom, the empowerment of women, and better, more modern education.

We do not seek to impose democracy on others, we seek only to help create conditions in which people can claim a freer future for themselves. We recognize as well that there is no "one size fits all" answer. Our vision of the future is not one where every person eats Big Macs and drinks Coke — or where every nation has a bicameral legislature with 535 members and a judiciary that follows the principles of Marbury vs. Madison.

Germany, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey show that freedom manifests itself differently around the globe — and that new liberties can find an honored place amidst ancient traditions. In countries such as Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, and Qatar, reform is underway, taking shape according to different local circumstances. And in Afghanistan this year, a traditional Loya Jirga assembly was the vehicle for creating the most broadly representative government in Afghan history.

Because of our own history, the United States knows we must be patient — and humble. Change — even if it is for the better — is often difficult. And

progress is sometimes slow. America has not always lived up to our own high standards. When the Founding Fathers said, “We, the people,” they didn’t mean me. Democracy is hard work. And 226 years later, we are still practicing each day to get it right.

We have the ability to forge a 21st century that lives up to our hopes and not down to our fears. But only if we go about our work with purpose and clarity. Only if we are unwavering in our refusal to live in a world governed by terror and chaos. Only if we are unwilling to ignore growing dangers from aggressive tyrants and deadly technologies. And only if we are persistent and patient in exercising our influence in the service of our ideals, and not just ourselves. ©