



For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
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Fact Sheet: President Bush Honors America's National Guard and Reserve

Today's Presidential Action:

Today, President Bush Delivered Remarks On The War On Terror In Boise. The President thanked the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve for their service and sacrifice during this time of war. Whether providing disaster relief and security here at home, or advancing freedom abroad, the men and women of the National Guard and Reserve are serving with courage and distinction and are defending the American people.

President Bush Honors The Service Of The National Guard And Reserve

- America's National Guard And Reserve Are Serving Honorably In All Aspects Of The War On Terror. The National Guard is protecting the Homeland and taking the fight to the enemy abroad. Since September 11th, more than 243,000 members of the National Guard have been mobilized for various missions in the War on Terror.
- Our Nation Is Depending On Guard And Reserve Members, Their Families, And Their Communities. A time of war is a time of sacrifice - and a heavy burden falls on our military families. By standing with our service members, they are standing up for America - and America appreciates their service. We also depend on the understanding and support of Guard employers. By enabling employees to serve, businesses are putting patriotism ahead of profit because they know that our prosperity and way of life depend on the freedom the Guard defends.
 - The Administration Is Working To Improve Service Conditions For The Guard And Reserve. The Administration is working to improve the call-up process so Guard members and their families receive more notice and information about deployments. In most cases, Guard members now receive at least 30 days' notification before mobilization. The Administration is also working to give as much certainty as possible about the length of mobilization and is working to minimize the number of extensions and repeat mobilizations. Guard members and their families will be treated with the dignity they deserve - and with the respect they have earned.
 - The Administration Is Working To Improve The Quality Of Life For The Guard And Reserve. The Administration has expanded health care benefits for Guard and Reserve forces and their families - giving access to the military's TRICARE system for up to 90 days before reporting and 180 days after deactivation. We are also expanding access to education by providing our Guard and Reserve forces between 40 and 80 percent of the education benefit available to active-duty forces - depending on the length of their mobilization in the War on Terror.
 - The Administration Is Working To Retain And Reward Members Of The Guard And Reserve. The Administration has tripled the amount that can be paid for re-enlisting in the National Guard or Reserve - and the President has asked Congress to authorize a new retention bonus for members of the Guard and Reserve who have critical skills we need in the struggle against the terrorists.

President Bush Has Outlined A Comprehensive Strategy To Win The War On Terror

- Protecting The Homeland. The Administration has reformed our intelligence services, trained more than 800,000 first responders, and disrupted terrorist cells in our midst through new tools like the USA Patriot Act. We are hunting down the terrorists in the shadows before they can attack our country again.
- Fighting The Terrorists Abroad Before They Can Attack Us Here At Home. September 11th taught us that retreating within our borders will not keep us safe while the terrorists plot and plan. That is why American men and women in uniform are taking the fight to the terrorists in Afghanistan, Iraq, the Horn of Africa, and elsewhere. The only way to defend our citizens where we live is to go after the terrorists where they plot and plan.
- Advancing Freedom To Ensure American Security. In the long run, the best way to defeat the terrorists is by offering an alternative to their ideology of hatred and fear. By advancing the cause of liberty in the Middle East, we are bringing hope to millions, security to our citizens - and laying the foundation of peace for our children and grandchildren. As people in the Middle East and across the world advance peace and gain freedom, America will be more secure.

Retreat And Isolation Will Not Make America Safe; We Must Complete The Mission In Iraq

- **September 11, 2001, Gave Us A Choice Between Waiting To Be Attacked Again And Going On The Offense.** During the last few decades, the terrorists grew to believe that if they attack America - as in Lebanon and Somalia - America would retreat and back down. They are trying to break America's will with acts of brutality and violence. Their goal is to force a retreat, so they can topple governments in the Middle East and turn that region into a safe haven for terrorism and tyranny. We saw the terrible harm that terrorists did when they took effective control of a failed state in Afghanistan, which led directly to the attacks of September 11th.
 - **America Will Not Wait To Be Attacked Again.**
America will confront emerging threats before they fully materialize. We will not allow the terrorists to establish new places of refuge in failed states, from which they can recruit and train and plan new attacks on our citizens. Nations that harbor a terrorist are just as guilty as the terrorists.
 - **We Must Complete The Mission In Iraq.**
A withdrawal of our troops in Iraq or the broader Middle East before the mission is complete - as some have called for - would only embolden the terrorists and create a staging ground to launch more attacks against America and other free people.
 - **The Iraqi People Are Making Progress.**
Iraqis braved threats and violence and defied the terrorists to make their voices heard in elections, and today they are working to write their own constitution. Producing a constitution is a difficult process that involves debate and compromise. Americans know this from our own history, and that is why we admire their thoughtful deliberations and determination to lay the foundation for a lasting democracy.
- **Members Of The National Guard And Reserve Understand That The Rise Of Liberty Is Critical To Our National Security.** Guard and

Reserves members understand the power of freedom because they have witnessed it with their own eyes. They have seen up close the desire for liberty, as Iraqis made their voices heard in elections and as they move toward their own secure democracy.

- **America Will Prevail Through The Challenges We Face In Iraq.** Since the morning of September 11th, we have known that the War on Terror would require great sacrifice. In this war, 491 heroes of our National Guard and Reserves have given their lives for a cause that is just and necessary for the security of our country - and now we will honor their sacrifice by completing their mission. We will prevail in this struggle because freedom is the permanent hope of mankind - and because we have on our side the greatest force for freedom in the history of the world: the brave men and women of the United States Armed Forces.

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