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## **An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom**

### **Securing America's Future**

By John McCain

From *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007

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Summary: America needs a president who can revitalize the country's purpose and standing in the world and defeat terrorist adversaries who threaten liberty at home and abroad. There is an enormous amount to do. The next U.S. president must be ready to show America and the world that this country's best days are yet to come and be ready to establish an enduring peace based on freedom.

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Since the dawn of our republic, Americans have believed that our nation was created for a purpose. We are, as Alexander Hamilton said, "a people of great destinies." From the American Revolution to the Cold War, Americans have understood their duty to serve a cause greater than self-interest and to keep faith with the eternal and universal principles of the Declaration of Independence. By overcoming threats to our nation's survival and to our way of life, and by seizing history's great opportunities, Americans have changed the world.

Now it is this generation's turn to restore and replenish the world's faith in our nation and our principles. President Harry Truman once said of America, "God has created us and brought us to our present position of power and strength for some great purpose." In his time, that great purpose was to erect the structures of peace and prosperity that provided safe passage through the Cold War. In the face of new dangers and opportunities, our next president will have a mandate to build an enduring global peace on the foundations of freedom, security, opportunity, prosperity, and hope.

America needs a president who can revitalize our country's purpose and standing in the world, defeat terrorist adversaries who threaten liberty at home and abroad, and build enduring peace. There is an enormous amount to do. Our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been costly in blood and treasure and in other less tangible ways as well. Our next president will need to rally nations across the world around common causes as only America can. There will be no time for on-the-job training. Given the present dangers, our country cannot afford the kind of malaise, drift, and fecklessness that followed the Vietnam War. The next president must be prepared to lead America and the world to victory -- and to seize the opportunities afforded by the unprecedented liberty and prosperity in the world today to build a peace that will last a century.

### WINNING THE WAR ON TERROR

Defeating radical Islamist extremists is the national security challenge of our time. Iraq is this war's central front, according to our commander there, General David Petraeus, and according to our enemies, including al Qaeda's leadership.

The recent years of mismanagement and failure in Iraq demonstrate that America should go to war only with sufficient troop levels and with a realistic and comprehensive plan for success. We did not do so in Iraq, and our country and the people of Iraq have paid a dear price. Only after four years of conflict did the United States adopt a counterinsurgency strategy, backed by increased force levels, that gives us a realistic chance of success. We cannot get those years back, and now the only responsible action for any presidential candidate is to look forward and outline the strategic posture in Iraq that is most likely to protect U.S. national interests.

So long as we can succeed in Iraq -- and I believe that we can -- we must succeed. The consequences of failure would be horrific: a historic loss at the hands of Islamist extremists who, after having defeated the Soviet Union in Afghanistan and the United States in Iraq, will believe that the world is going their way and that anything is possible; a failed state in the heart of the Middle East providing sanctuary for terrorists; a civil war that could

quickly develop into a regional conflict and even genocide; a decisive end to the prospect of a modern democracy in Iraq, for which large Iraqi majorities have repeatedly voted; and an invitation for Iran to dominate Iraq and the region even more.

Whether success grows closer or more distant over the coming months, it is clear that Iraq will be a central issue for the next U.S. president. Democratic candidates have promised to withdraw U.S. troops and "end the war" by fiat, regardless of the consequences. To make such decisions based on the political winds at home, rather than on the realities in the theater, is to court disaster. The war in Iraq cannot be wished away, and it is a miscalculation of historic magnitude to believe that the consequences of failure will be limited to one administration or one party. This is an American war, and its outcome will touch every one of our citizens for years to come.

That is why I support our continuing efforts to win in Iraq. It is also why I oppose a preemptive withdrawal strategy that has no Plan B for the aftermath of its inevitable failure and the greater problems that would ensue.

What happens in Iraq will also affect Afghanistan. There has been progress in Afghanistan: over two million refugees have returned, the welfare of Afghan citizens has meaningfully improved, and historic elections took place in 2004. The Taliban's recent resurgence, however, threatens to lead Afghanistan to revert to its pre-9/11 role as a sanctuary for terrorists with global reach. Our recommitment to Afghanistan must include increasing NATO forces, suspending the debilitating restrictions on when and how those forces can fight, expanding the training and equipping of the Afghan National Army through a long-term partnership with NATO to make it more professional and multiethnic, and deploying significantly more foreign police trainers. It must also address the current political deficiencies in judicial reform, reconstruction, governance, and anticorruption efforts.

Success in Afghanistan is critical to stopping al Qaeda, but success in neighboring Pakistan is just as vital. We must continue to work with President Pervez Musharraf to dismantle the cells and camps that the Taliban and al Qaeda maintain in his country. These groups still have sanctuaries there, and the "Talibanization" of Pakistani society is advancing. The United States must help Pakistan resist the forces of extremism by making a long-term commitment to the country. This would mean enhancing Pakistan's ability to act against insurgent safe havens and bring children into schools and out of extremist madrasahs and supporting Pakistani moderates.

Our counterterrorism efforts cannot be limited to stateless groups operating in safe havens. Iran, the world's chief state sponsor of terrorism, continues its deadly quest for nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. Protected by a nuclear arsenal, Iran would be even more willing and able to sponsor terrorist attacks against any perceived enemy, including the United States and Israel, or even to pass nuclear materials to one of its allied terrorist networks. The next president must confront this threat directly, and that effort must begin with tougher political and economic sanctions. If the United Nations is unwilling to act, the United States must lead a group of like-minded countries to impose effective multilateral sanctions, such as restrictions on exports of refined gasoline, outside the UN framework. America and its partners should also privatize the sanctions effort by supporting a disinvestment campaign to isolate and delegitimize the regime in Tehran, whose policies are already opposed by many Iranian citizens. And military action, although not the preferred option, must remain on the table: Tehran must understand that it cannot win a showdown with the world.

Meanwhile, in view of the increased threats to Israel -- from Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas, and others -- the next U.S. president must continue America's long-standing support for Israel, including by providing needed military equipment and technology and ensuring that Israel maintains its qualitative military edge. The long-elusive quest for peace between Israel and the Palestinians must remain a priority. But the goal must be genuine peace, and so Hamas must be isolated even as the United States intensifies its commitment to finding an enduring settlement.

Defeating the terrorists who already threaten America is vital, but just as important is preventing a new generation of them from joining the fight. As president, I will employ every economic, diplomatic, political, legal, and ideological tool at our disposal to aid moderate Muslims -- women's rights campaigners, labor leaders, lawyers, journalists, teachers, tolerant imams, and many others -- who are resisting the well-financed campaign of extremism that is tearing Muslim societies apart. My administration, with its partners, will help friendly Muslim states establish the building blocks of open and tolerant societies. And we will nurture a culture of hope and economic opportunity by establishing a free-trade area from Morocco to Afghanistan, open to all who do not sponsor terrorism.

## DEFENDING THE HOMELAND

In 1947, the Truman administration launched a massive overhaul of the nation's foreign policy, defense, and

intelligence agencies to meet the challenges of the Cold War. Today, we must do the same to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Our armed forces are seriously overstretched and underresourced. As president, I will increase the size of the U.S. Army and the Marine Corps from the currently planned level of roughly 750,000 troops to 900,000 troops. Enhancing recruitment will require more resources and will take time, but it must be done as soon as possible.

Along with more personnel, our military needs additional equipment in order to make up for its recent losses and modernize. We can partially offset some of this additional investment by cutting wasteful spending. But we can also afford to spend more on national defense, which currently consumes less than four cents of every dollar that our economy generates -- far less than what we spent during the Cold War. We must also accelerate the transformation of our military, which is still configured to fight enemies that no longer exist.

America needs not simply more soldiers but more soldiers with the skills necessary to help friendly governments and their security forces resist common foes. I will create an Army Advisory Corps with 20,000 soldiers to partner with militaries abroad, and I will increase the number of U.S. personnel available to engage in Special Forces operations, civil affairs activities, military policing, and military intelligence. We also need a nonmilitary deployable police force to train foreign forces and help maintain law and order in places threatened by state collapse.

Today, understanding foreign cultures is not a luxury but a strategic necessity. As president, I will launch a crash program in civilian and military schools to prepare more experts in critical languages such as Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, and Pashto. Students at our service academies should be required to study abroad. I will enlarge the military's Foreign Area Officer program and create a new specialty in strategic interrogation in order to produce more interrogators who can obtain critical knowledge from detainees by using advanced psychological techniques, rather than the kind of abusive tactics properly prohibited by the Geneva Conventions.

I will set up a new agency patterned after the erstwhile Office of Strategic Services. A modern-day OSS could draw together specialists in unconventional warfare, civil affairs, and psychological warfare; covert-action operators; and experts in anthropology, advertising, and other relevant disciplines from inside and outside government. Like the original OSS, this would be a small, nimble, can-do organization. It would fight terrorist subversion around the world and in cyberspace. It could take risks that our bureaucracies today rarely consider taking -- such as deploying infiltrating agents without diplomatic cover in terrorist states and organizations -- and play a key role in frontline efforts to rebuild failed states.

As we increase our military capacity, we must also enhance our civilian capacity. As president, I will energize and expand our postconflict reconstruction capabilities so that any military campaign would be complemented by a civilian "surge" that would build the political and economic foundations of peace. To better coordinate our disparate military and civilian operations, I will ask Congress for a civilian follow-on to the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act, which fostered a culture of joint operations within the military services. The new act would create a framework for civil servants and military forces to train and work together in order to facilitate cooperation in postconflict reconstruction.

We must also revitalize our public diplomacy. In 1998, the Clinton administration and Congress mistakenly agreed to abolish the U.S. Information Agency and move its public diplomacy functions to the State Department. This amounted to unilateral disarmament in the war of ideas. I will work with Congress to create a new independent agency with the sole purpose of getting America's message to the world -- a critical element in combating Islamic extremism and restoring the positive image of our country abroad.

## UNITING THE WORLD'S DEMOCRACIES

Our organizations and partnerships must be as international as the challenges we confront. Today, U.S. soldiers are serving in Afghanistan with British, Canadian, Dutch, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Spanish, and Turkish soldiers from the NATO alliance. They are also serving alongside forces from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the Philippines, and South Korea -- all democratic allies or close partners of the United States. But these troops are not all part of a common structure. They do not work together systematically or meet regularly to develop diplomatic and economic strategies to meet the common challenges they face.

NATO has begun to fill this gap by promoting partnerships between the alliance and great democracies in Asia and elsewhere. We should go further by linking democratic nations in one common organization: a worldwide League of Democracies. This would be unlike Woodrow Wilson's doomed plan for the universal-membership League of

Nations. Instead, it would be similar to what Theodore Roosevelt envisioned: like-minded nations working together for peace and liberty. The organization could act when the UN fails -- to relieve human suffering in places such as Darfur, combat HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa, fashion better policies to confront environmental crises, provide unimpeded market access to those who endorse economic and political freedom, and take other measures unattainable by existing regional or universal-membership systems.

This League of Democracies would not supplant the UN or other international organizations but complement them by harnessing the political and moral advantages offered by united democratic action. By taking steps such as bringing concerted pressure to bear on tyrants in Burma (renamed Myanmar by its military government in 1989) or Zimbabwe, uniting to impose sanctions on Iran, and providing support to struggling democracies in Serbia and Ukraine, the League of Democracies would serve as a unique handmaiden of freedom. If I am elected president, during my first year in office I will call a summit of the world's democracies to seek the views of my counterparts and explore the steps necessary to realize this vision -- just as America led in creating NATO six decades ago.

#### REVITALIZING THE TRANSATLANTIC PARTNERSHIP

The United States did not single-handedly win the Cold War; the transatlantic alliance did, in concert with partners around the world. The bonds we share with Europe in terms of history, values, and interests are unique. Unfortunately, they have frayed. As president, one of my top foreign policy priorities will be to revitalize the transatlantic partnership.

Americans should welcome the rise of a strong, confident European Union. The future of the transatlantic relationship lies in confronting the challenges of the twenty-first century worldwide: developing a common energy policy, creating a transatlantic common market tying our economies more closely together, and institutionalizing our cooperation on issues such as climate change, foreign assistance, and democracy promotion.

A decade and a half ago, the Russian people threw off the tyranny of communism and seemed determined to build a democracy and a free market and to join the West. Today, we see in Russia diminishing political freedoms, a leadership dominated by a clique of former intelligence officers, efforts to bully democratic neighbors, such as Georgia, and attempts to manipulate Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas. We need a new Western approach to this revanchist Russia. We should start by ensuring that the G-8, the group of eight highly industrialized states, becomes again a club of leading market democracies: it should include Brazil and India but exclude Russia. Rather than tolerate Russia's nuclear blackmail or cyberattacks, Western nations should make clear that the solidarity of NATO, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, is indivisible and that the organization's doors remain open to all democracies committed to the defense of freedom. We must also increase our programs supporting freedom and the rule of law in Russia and emphasize that genuine partnership remains open to Moscow if it desires it but that such a partnership would involve a commitment to being a responsible actor, internationally and domestically.

More broadly, America needs to revive the democratic solidarity that united the West during the Cold War. We cannot build an enduring peace based on freedom by ourselves. We must be willing to listen to our democratic allies. Being a great power does not mean that we can do whatever we want whenever we want, nor should we assume that we have all the wisdom, knowledge, and resources necessary to succeed. When we believe international action -- whether military, economic, or diplomatic -- is necessary, we must work to persuade our friends and allies that we are right. And we must also be willing to be persuaded by them. To be a good leader, America must be a good ally.

#### SHAPING THE ASIA-PACIFIC CENTURY

Power in the world today is moving east; the Asia-Pacific region is on the rise. If we grasp the opportunities present in the unfolding world, this century can become safe and both American and Asian, both prosperous and free.

Asia has made enormous strides in recent decades. Its economic achievements are well known; less known is that more people live under democratic rule in Asia than in any other region of the world. Japan's former prime minister spoke of an "arc of freedom and prosperity" stretching across Asia. India's prime minister has called liberal democracy "the natural order of social and political organization in today's world." Asian countries are drawing closer together, striking trade and security agreements with one another and with other states.

North Korea's totalitarian regime and impoverished society buck these trends. It is unclear today whether North Korea is truly committed to verifiable denuclearization and a full accounting of all its nuclear materials and

facilities, two steps that are necessary before any lasting diplomatic agreement can be reached. Future talks must take into account North Korea's ballistic missile programs, its abduction of Japanese citizens, and its support for terrorism and proliferation.

The key to meeting this and other challenges in a changing Asia is increasing cooperation with our allies. The linchpin to the region's promise is continued American engagement. I welcome Japan's international leadership and emergence as a global power, encourage its admirable "values-based diplomacy," and support its bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council. As president, I will tend carefully to our ever-stronger alliance with Australia, whose troops are fighting shoulder to shoulder with ours in Afghanistan and Iraq. I will seek to rebuild our frayed partnership with South Korea by emphasizing economic and security cooperation and will cement our growing partnership with India.

In Southeast Asia, I will seek an elevated partnership with Indonesia and continue to expand defense cooperation with Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Vietnam while working with willing regional partners to promote democracy; defeat the threats of terrorism, crime, and the narcotics trade; and end Burma's deplorable human rights abuses. The United States should participate more actively in Asian regional organizations, including those led by members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. As president, I will seek to institutionalize the new quadrilateral security partnership among the major Asia-Pacific democracies: Australia, India, Japan, and the United States.

Dealing with a rising China will be a central challenge for the next American president. Recent prosperity in China has brought more people out of poverty faster than during any other time in human history. China's newfound power implies responsibilities. It raises legitimate expectations that internationally China will behave as a responsible economic partner by developing a transparent code of conduct for its corporations, assuring the safety of its exports, adopting a market approach to currency valuation, pursuing sustainable environmental policies, and abandoning its go-it-alone approach to world energy supplies.

China could also bolster its claim that it is "peacefully rising" by being more transparent about its significant military buildup. When China builds new submarines, adds hundreds of new jet fighters, modernizes its arsenal of strategic ballistic missiles, and tests antisatellite weapons, the United States legitimately must question the intent of such provocative acts. When China threatens democratic Taiwan with a massive arsenal of missiles and warlike rhetoric, the United States must take note. When China enjoys close economic and diplomatic relations with pariah states such as Burma, Sudan, and Zimbabwe, tension will result. When China proposes regional forums and economic arrangements designed to exclude America from Asia, the United States will react.

China and the United States are not destined to be adversaries. We have numerous overlapping interests. U.S.-Chinese relations can benefit both countries and, in turn, the Asia-Pacific region and the world. But until China moves toward political liberalization, our relationship will be based on periodically shared interests rather than the bedrock of shared values.

The United States should set the standard for trade liberalization in Asia. Completing free-trade agreements with Malaysia and Thailand, realizing the full potential of our new trade agreement with South Korea, and institutionalizing economic partnerships with India and Indonesia so that they build on existing agreements with Australia and Singapore should set the stage for an ambitious Pacific-wide effort to liberalize trade. Such trade liberalization would benefit Americans and Asians alike.

#### BUILDING A HEMISPHERE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY

John F. Kennedy described the people of Latin America as our "firm and ancient friends, united by history and experience and by our determination to advance the values of American civilization." The countries of Latin America are our natural partners, but U.S. inattention has harmed our relationships. We must enhance U.S. relations with Mexico to control illegal immigration and defeat drug cartels, and with Brazil, a partner whose leadership in the UN peacekeeping force in Haiti is a model for fostering regional security. My administration would give these and other great democratic Latin American nations a strong voice in the League of Democracies -- a voice they are denied in the UN Security Council.

We must also work together to counter the propaganda of demagogues who threaten the security and prosperity of the Americas. Hugo Chávez has overseen the dismantling of Venezuela's democracy by undermining the parliament, the judiciary, the media, free labor unions, and private enterprises. His regime is acquiring advanced military equipment. And it is trying to build a global anti-American axis. My administration will work to

marginalize such nefarious influences. It will also prepare immediately for Cuba's transition to democracy by developing a plan with regional and European partners for a post-Castro Cuba so as to be ready to spark rapid change in that long-suffering country when the time comes. We must build on the passage of the Central America Free Trade Agreement by ratifying pending trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and Peru and move the process of completing a Free Trade Area of the Americas forward.

#### AIDING AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

Africa's problems -- poverty, corruption, disease, and instability -- are well known. Less discussed is the promise offered by many countries on that continent. My administration will seek to engage on a political, economic, and security level with friendly governments across Africa. Many African nations will not reach their true potential without external assistance to combat the entrenched problems, such as HIV/AIDS, that afflict Africans disproportionately. I will establish the goal of eradicating malaria -- the number one killer of African children under the age of five -- on the continent. In addition to saving millions of lives in the world's poorest regions, such a campaign would do much to add luster to America's image in the world. These and other efforts, including enhancing trade and investment, would assist Africans in sparking a renaissance that would enable the continent's people to achieve their potential.

Africa continues to offer the most compelling case for humanitarian intervention. With respect to the Darfur region of Sudan, I fear that the United States is once again repeating the mistakes it made in Bosnia and Rwanda. In Bosnia, we acted late but eventually saved countless lives. In Rwanda, we stood by and watched the slaughter and later pledged that we would not do so again. The genocide in Darfur demands U.S. leadership. My administration will consider the use of all elements of American power to stop the outrageous acts of human destruction that have unfolded there.

#### PREVENTING NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION

The nuclear nonproliferation regime is broken for one clear reason: the mistaken assumption behind the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) that nuclear technology can spread without nuclear weapons eventually following. The next U.S. president must convene a summit of the world's leading powers -- none of which have an interest in seeing a world full of nuclear-armed states -- with three agenda items. First, the notion that non-nuclear-weapons states have a right to nuclear technology must be revisited. Second, the burden of proof for suspected violators of the NPT must be reversed. Instead of requiring the International Atomic Energy Agency board to reach unanimous agreement in order to act, as is the case today, there should be an automatic suspension of nuclear assistance to states that the agency cannot guarantee are in full compliance with safeguard agreements. Finally, the IAEA's annual budget of \$130 million must be substantially increased so that the agency can meet its monitoring and safeguarding tasks.

#### SECURING ENERGY AND SAVING THE ENVIRONMENT

America's dependence on foreign oil constitutes a critical strategic vulnerability. America accounts for 25 percent of global demand for oil but possesses less than three percent of the world's proven reserves. Most of the world's known reserves are in the Persian Gulf, in the hands of dictators or nationalized oil companies. Terrorists understand our vulnerability: had it succeeded, the attempted suicide attack on a Saudi refinery in February 2006 would have driven the world price of oil above \$150 per barrel. The transfer of American wealth to the Middle East through continued oil purchases helps sustain the conditions under which extremism breeds, and the burning of oil and other fossil fuels spurs global warming, a gathering danger to our planet.

My national energy strategy will amount to a declaration of independence from our reliance on oil sheiks and our vulnerability to their troubled politics. This strategy will include employing technology to achieve new efficiencies in energy extraction and consumption, enforcing conservation, creating market incentives to encourage the development of alternative sources of energy and hybrid vehicles, and expanding sources of renewable energy. I will also greatly increase the use of nuclear power, a zero-emission energy source. Given the proper incentives, our innovators, scientists, entrepreneurs, and workers have the capability to lead the world in achieving energy security; given the stakes, they must.

I have proposed a bipartisan plan in the U.S. Senate to address the problem of climate change and ensure a sustainable future for humankind. My market-based approach will set reasonable caps on emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, provide industries with tradable emissions credits, and create other incentives for the deployment of new and better energy sources and technologies. It is time for America to lead the world in

protecting the environment for future generations.

## PREPARING TO LEAD

As president, I will make America's economic leadership in the globalized world of the twenty-first century a centerpiece of its engagement in foreign affairs. Today, from Singapore to South Africa, more people than ever before have embraced our liberal capitalist model of economic freedom and our culture of opportunity. Some Americans see globalization and the rise of economic giants such as China and India as a threat. We should reform our job training and education programs to more effectively help displaced American workers find new jobs that take advantage of trade and innovation. But we should continue to promote free trade, as it is vital to American prosperity. Americans will thrive in a world of economic freedom because our products and services remain the best and because our country draws strength from the forces shaping the new global economy, ranging from inflows of foreign investment to new businesses created by highly skilled immigrants. Americans can be confident that a world of economic and political freedom will sustain our global leadership by promoting our values and enhancing our prosperity. To unite us with friends and allies in a common prosperity, as president I will aggressively promote global trade liberalization at the World Trade Organization and expand America's free-trade agreements to friendly nations on every continent.

American leadership has helped build a world that is more secure, more prosperous, and freer than ever before. Our unique form of leadership -- the antithesis of empire -- gives us moral credibility, which is more powerful than any show of arms. We are rich in people and resources but richer still in ideals and vision -- and the means to realize them. Yet today much of the world has come to challenge our actions and doubt our intentions. Polls indicate that the United States is more unpopular now than at any time in history and increasingly viewed as pursuing its narrow self-interest. The people who hold these views are wrong. We are a special nation, the closest thing to a "shining city on a hill" ever to have existed. But it is incumbent on us to restore our mantle as a global leader, reestablish our moral credibility, and rebuild those damaged relationships that once brought so much good to so many places.

As president, I will seek the widest possible circle of allies through the League of Democracies, NATO, the UN, and the Organization of American States. During President Ronald Reagan's deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles and President George H. W. Bush's Gulf War, the United States was joined by vast coalitions despite considerable opposition to American policies among foreign publics. These alliances came about because America had carefully cultivated relationships and shared values with its friends abroad. Working multilaterally can be a frustrating experience, but approaching problems with allies works far better than facing problems alone.

Almost two centuries ago, James Madison declared that "the great struggle of the Epoch" was "between liberty and despotism." Many thought that this struggle ended with the Cold War, but it did not. It has taken on new guises, such as Islamist terrorists using our technological advances for their murderous designs and resurgent autocrats reminiscent of the nineteenth century. International terrorists capable of inflicting mass destruction are a new phenomenon. But what they seek and what they stand for are as old as time. They are part of a worldwide political, economic, and philosophical struggle between the future and the past, progress and reaction, liberty and despotism. Our security, our prosperity, and our democratic way of life depend on the outcome of that struggle.

Thomas Jefferson argued that America was the "solitary republic of the world, the only monument of human rights, and the sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom and self-government, from hence it is to be lighted up in other regions of the earth, if other regions of the earth shall ever become susceptible of its benign influence." Since that time two centuries ago when the United States was the "solitary republic of the world," more people than ever before have come under the "benign influence" of liberty. The protection and promotion of the democratic ideal, at home and abroad, will be the surest source of security and peace for the century that lies before us. The next U.S. president must be ready to lead, ready to show America and the world that this country's best days are yet to come, and ready to establish an enduring peace based on freedom that can safeguard American security for the rest of the twenty-first century. I am ready.

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