



House Policy Committee
Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515-6549

Policy Statement on the Defense of the United States

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The pall of smoke has barely lifted around the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, but certain key elements of our response are already clear.

America can and must carry on—not “business as usual,” but rather as a clear sign that terrorists cannot set America's agenda. Even as we mourn the victims and pursue their murderers, America must also show the world that we are stronger than terrorism.

Although the strikes against New York and Washington are crimes against humanity, their punishment must be far more than a law-enforcement operation.

Determining those responsible for these crimes requires the same kind of intelligence work used in complex criminal cases. But once responsibility has been determined, the United States should respond to them as what they are—acts of war against our free society, to be dealt with by all necessary means at our disposal.

Passive defenses against terrorism are a necessary part of a comprehensive response. Most importantly, we must proactively seek out and destroy the infrastructure of terrorism. The United States must redouble its efforts to strengthen our preventive measures against terrorism, including expanding our intelligence capabilities. In addition, and most importantly, we must proactively find and crush the whole support infrastructure of terrorism. As former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger wrote in the aftermath of the attacks, “the government should be charged with a systematic response that, one hopes, will end the way the attack on Pearl Harbor ended—with the destruction of the system that is responsible for it.”

There can be no distinction between those who execute terrorist acts and those who harbor or otherwise materially support them. As President Bush has promised, “we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them.”

The civilized world must unite against terrorism. Civilized nations must show at least as much unity as the new International of criminal governments and terrorists. It is therefore appropriate that NATO, for the first time in its 52-year history, has voted to invoke Article Five of its Charter—the core of the NATO alliance, which treats an attack on any one of the 19 member nations as an attack on all of them and allows for collective action by all of its members. Now the rest of the world must show the same solidarity. Countries that to date have been

reluctant to stand with America against terrorism, either because of domestic politics or because of financial considerations, must now decide where they stand—with America and the civilized world, or with international terrorism. Many nations beyond NATO have already affirmed their support, and many more will in the days to come.

Terrorists and the governments that support them must not be allowed to threaten America with ballistic missiles, the ultimate terrorist weapon. The attacks on Washington and New York have confirmed our worst fears about the international terrorists who target America. They seek to inflict the maximum possible number of American deaths, including in particular innocent civilian deaths. They enjoy the cooperation not only of interlocking support groups but of foreign governments who share their deadly aims. They have largely inaccessible territorial bases. They have deep financial resources. They have a capacity for deception and secrecy that appears to have successfully blinded sophisticated American intelligence efforts that have specifically targeted their activities for over a decade. They have hitherto unsuspected sophistication, apparently including an ability to procure multiple trained pilots of large aircraft. And we know—to an absolute certainty—that they are avidly seeking the means to deliver the ultimate terrorist attack on America, an assault using weapons of mass destruction. Can anyone doubt that these groups and their state sponsors would give anything to procure and use the ultimate means of delivering such an attack—ballistic missiles? We cannot predict where and how terrorists and rogue states will next renew their assault on our country. We cannot even be certain which countries and groups will pose such threats in future. We can only be sure that terrorists and rogue states will seek out new methods and targets, and that only a robust defense against the full spectrum of known and emerging threats can give America any possibility of protection. Accordingly, the sterile attempt to pit one defensive program against another—to create a zero-sum competition between different threats—must cease. The answer to the spectrum of deadly threats facing us cannot be “either/or.” It must be “both/and.”

There is no place for partisanship in this struggle. Today, the United States is a nation at war. Already, we have sustained more casualties than we suffered at Pearl Harbor. We must come together as a nation behind the President in facing down this deadly threat. Just as two years ago an overwhelming bipartisan majority in Congress and a Democratic President formally declared that it is the national policy of the United States to deploy an effective national missile defense as soon as technologically feasible, we must come together again to protect the American people from the whole spectrum of threats that confront us, including both the threats of today and the rapidly-emerging threats of tomorrow. At every great crisis in our nation’s history we have come together as a people to meet the challenge. This crisis must call us together, as well.

A long struggle lies ahead. Years of effort and monies we would prefer to spend on peaceful pursuits will be required, and setbacks will be suffered. But as Franklin Roosevelt told the nation sixty years ago after Pearl Harbor, “No matter how long it may take us to overcome this premeditated aggression, the American people in their righteous might will win through to absolute victory. I believe I interpret the will of Congress and of the people when I assert that we will not only defend ourselves to the uttermost, but will make very certain that this form of treachery shall never endanger us again.”