
From: H

RELEASE IN PART B6

Sent: 9/9/2011 11:09:43 PM +00:00

To: Oscar Flores

B6

Subject: Fw: Fwd: FW: S speech today: 21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

Pls print.

From: Judith McHale [mailto:

Sent: Friday, September 09, 2011 06:27 PM

To: H

Subject: Fwd: FW: S speech today: 21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

It was great to see you yesterday --- albeit briefly!! Just wanted you to know I thought your C/T speech today was terrific. Also incredibly pleased that POTUS signed the EO creating the CSCC. Your insight into the importance of the creation of this new unit and your support through the endless bureaucratic hurdles we encountered made it all possible. Just sorry I could not have been there to see it through to completion but hope you are pleased with the results so far. Richard LeBaron and the team have done a terrific job. I know they will work well with Dan Benjamin and his team and do all that they can to ensure that DoS under your leadership is recognized for the contributions you all make to enhancing our nation's security.

You're the best!!

jm

----- Forwarded message -----

From: LeBaron, Richard B <LeBaronRB@state.gov>

Date: Fri, Sep 9, 2011 at 5:29 PM

Subject: FW: S speech today: 21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

To: Judith McHale

B6

Excerpt first and then full text below. RL

From: Weil, Lynne A
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2011 3:29 PM
To: LeBaron, Richard B; Sreebny, Daniel; Parsont, Diane M; Gliha, Ryan M
Subject: S speech today: 21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

"It is with this in mind that we developed and launched the new Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, which is tightly focused on undermining the terrorist propaganda and dissuading potential recruits. The center is housed at the State Department, but is a true whole-of-government endeavor. It has a mandate from the President. And as part of this effort, a group of tech savvy specialists - fluent in Urdu and Arabic - that we call the digital outreach team are contesting online space, media websites and forums where extremists have long spread propaganda and recruited followers. With timely posts, often of independent news reports, this team is working to expose al-Qaida's and extremists' contradictions and abuses, including its continuing brutal attacks on Muslim civilians. This effort is still small, but it is now growing.

"Take, for example, a short video clip that the team put together earlier this year. First, we hear a recording of al-Qaida's new leader, Zawahiri, claiming that peaceful action will never bring about change in the Middle East. Then we see footage of protests and celebrations in Egypt. The team posted this video on popular websites and stirred up a flurry of responses. Like "Zawahiri has no business with Egypt; we will solve our problems ourselves," wrote one commentator on the website Egypt Forum. Another on Facebook said those are people no one listens to anymore. Now, we won't change every mind with these tactics, but we know from extremists in our own country that they are recruited by and influenced by websites. So we're going to do everything we can to be in that fight for their minds and their hearts, and we are ratcheting up the pressure.

"Now, this playbook is still being written. But the more we learn about al-Qaida's structure and methods, the more we have homed in on a number of specific recruiting hotspots, not just online but particular neighborhoods, villages, prisons, and schools. We have found that recruits tend to come in clusters, influenced by family and social networks. By focusing on these hotspots in cooperation with our partners, we can begin to disrupt the recruiting chain."

This email is UNCLASSIFIED.

From: U.S. Department of State [mailto:usstatebpa@subscriptions.fcg.gov]
Sent: Friday, September 09, 2011 3:22 PM
To: Weil, Lynne A
Subject: 21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

[21st Century Statecraft: Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism](#)
Fri, 09 Sep 2011 13:44:13 -0500

Smart Power Approach to Counterterrorism

Remarks

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Secretary of State

John Jay School of Criminal Justice

New York, New York

September 9, 2011

SECRETARY CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you very much, President Travis. And it is, for me, a great personal pleasure to be in this new facility for John Jay. I had the opportunity to visit John Jay when it wasn't quite as light-filled as this atrium is but knowing that it was always fulfilling its mission. And to come back here today to be with all of you is a singular honor.

I'm also very honored to be here with so many friends and colleagues, people who I had the great experience of working with over the last ten years as a senator, now as Secretary of State, people who made a real difference to this city, this state, the country, and indeed the world. And I think about our time together and the work that we did, and it fills me with great gratitude that I had such an opportunity to be just a small part of what so many of you have done in the days and years since 9/11.

I know that this is a time when we are meeting here in New York amid a looking-back as well as a looking-forward, and with the news last night of a specific credible, but unconfirmed, report that al-Qaida again is seeking to harm Americans and, in particular, to target New York and Washington. This should not surprise any of us. It is a continuing reminder of the stakes in our struggle against violent extremism no matter who propagates it, no matter where it comes from, no matter who its targets might be. We are taking this threat seriously. Federal, state, and local authorities are taking all steps to address it.

And of course, making it public, as was done yesterday, is intended to enlist the millions and millions of New Yorkers and Americans to be the eyes and the ears of vigilance. Of course, people should proceed with their lives and do what they would do ordinarily, but to be part of this great network of unity and support against those who would wreak violence and evil on innocent people.

I could not think of a better place to discuss this topic than here at John Jay. For decades you have trained many of New York's leaders in law enforcement and public service, including many who are working right now around the clock to keep our cities safe and secure during this anniversary weekend. And as President Travis has reminded us, ten years ago, John Jay lost more students and alumni, many of them first responders, than any other educational institution in the country. And you became one of the few institutions to offer a master's program in the study of terrorism. Because as John Jay has recognized, the way we understand the meaning of that terrible day, which brought out the best of humanity alongside the worst, will help determine how we meet the continuing challenge of terrorism, which remains an urgent question not only for the United States, but indeed for the world.

This memorial, which is fashioned from steel salvaged from the north tower will serve as a reminder here at John Jay of what this city and our country went through not only on 9/11 with the memories of the twisted girders and the shattered beams looming above the pile, not only the faces and images of firefighters and police officers and construction workers and volunteers who responded immediately and who stayed to dig through the rubble, but it will also remind us of the resilience of our city and our country and the fortitude that we have shown in picking ourselves up, going on with our lives, and dealing with the serious questions we face.

When I first visited Ground Zero on September 12th with Senator Schumer and Mayor Giuliani and Governor Pataki, the air was thick, and many of us wore masks that were meant to protect us who were only there for a matter of hours from what was in the air. But as I watched the firefighters emerging from the - behind the curtain of darkness, the soot that covered them, they weren't wearing masks; they were focused on the job in front of them. When I returned a week later, the rescuers were still there. It was raining that day, but they hadn't

stopped. They stayed right there looking for their comrades, looking for the hundreds of others whom they never had known in life but would try to recover in death.

At a family assistance center on Pier 94, I began to meet with and work with families who were cradling photos of their missing loved ones. There are some wounds that never fully heal that we all live with for the rest of our lives, and there are those who have shown how strong they have been in the face of their pain and their loss and have moved forward to lead with new purpose to help build a better future.

There were not very many survivors, as you remember, but I tried to meet with them. I remember visiting one at St. Vincent's who had been so profoundly injured by a part of the airplane falling on her. I remember going to the rehabilitation center up in Westchester where a number of the burn victims had been moved. I was very honored to work with these survivors, one of whom, Lauren Manning, has been very much front and center in my mind because of the book that she has just published, and her husband Greg, who is with us. Although she was badly burned, through fierce willpower and character, she fought her way back and reclaimed her life. And now she and Greg have two wonderful young sons. In her book, Lauren writes that we may all, in fact, we all will be touched by adversity as we go on our life's journey, but we can refuse to be trapped by it.

And that is what emerged so powerfully on September 11th and all the days that followed - compassion, courage, and character as strong as one can imagine and even stronger than the steel that were in the towers. We learned something about what makes this city great and what makes this country exceptional.

New Yorkers worked hard to sustain that spirit. Sally Regenhard went to work to make sure that her son Christian would be remembered and that his death would lead to changes in the way that we build skyscrapers, and the Christian Regenhard Center for Emergency Response Studies is here at John Jay. Jay Winuk and David Paine, in memory of Jay's brother, began My Good Deed. And now hundreds of thousands of Americans and people around the world are trying to channel their remembrance into positive acts on behalf of others. Dr. David Prezant and Dr. Kerry Kelly from the fire department immediately understood what was necessary to track the health of our firefighters and began to compile the most extraordinary record of what happened to those who were there every day and the price that they paid, even though they would not take back a second of what they did.

So we have some examples of those who have helped us make sense of what is almost beyond understanding. And New Yorkers worked hard to sustain that spirit as the days turned into months and then years. The young man who was my press secretary at the time, after going down to Ground Zero with me, going to meet family members, volunteered for the military. Thousands signed up for the fire and police departments, and we did come together to help those who grew sick as a result of their time at Ground Zero. And this week, a new medical study has documented the high rates of cancer among New York firefighters exposed there. So the work is not done. We still have heroes to honor, friends to care for, family to love. And there is also other unfinished business for us as a nation.

On that day, Americans pledged to do everything in our power to prevent another attack and to defeat the terrorists responsible. As a senator from New York, I stood with the 9/11 families who called for a commission to investigate the attacks and recommend reforms. Then we worked together to begin implementing them.

Ten years later, we have made important strides. Our government is better organized. Our defenses are safer than on 9/11. But we still face real threats, as we see today, and there is more work to be done. As the members of the 9/11 Commission recently reported, a number of

their major recommendations remain unfulfilled. For example, much-needed radio frequencies have not yet been allotted to first responders to allow them to communicate effectively in a crisis – an issue that I worked on for years in the Senate and is long overdue for completion.

As President Obama has said over the last decade, our government also sometimes went off course, failed to live up to our own values, but we never lost sight of our mission, and we set aside those detours to stay focused, and we made progress. As we move forward, we are determined not to let the specter of terrorism darken the national character that has always been America's greatest asset.

The United States has thrived as an open society, a principled nation, and a global leader. And we cannot and will not live in fear, sacrifice our values, or pull back from the world. Closing our borders, for example, might keep out some who would do us harm, but it would also deprive us entrepreneurs, ideas, and energy, things that help define who we are as a nation, and ensure our global leadership for years to come.

Before 9/11, the commission found that America did not adapt quickly enough to new and different kinds of threats, and it is imperative that we not make that mistake again. It is also imperative that we adapt just as quickly to new kinds of opportunities, that we not be paralyzed or preoccupied by the threats we face, that we not squander our strengths.

So we keep our focus not only on what we are fighting against – on the terrorist networks that attacked us that day and continue to threaten us – but also on what we are fighting for – for our values of tolerance and equality and opportunity, for universal rights and the rule of law, for the opportunity of children everywhere to live up to their God-given potential. That's a fight we can be confident of and a mission we can be proud of. So today, after a decade of learning the lessons of 9/11, let's take stock of where we stand and where we need to go as a nation.

We find ourselves in a moment of historic change and opportunity. The war in Iraq is winding down. The war in Afghanistan has entered a transition phase. Millions of people are pushing their nations to move away from repression that has long fueled resentment and extremism. They are embracing universal human rights and dignity. And this has discredited the extremist argument that only violence can bring about change. Against this backdrop, the death of Usama bin Ladin has put al-Qaida on the path to defeat. And as President Obama has pledged, we will not relent until that job is done.

Earlier this summer, the Administration released its National Strategy for Counterterrorism. It makes very clear we face both a short-term and a long-term challenge. First, to keep up the pressure on al-Qaida and its network. Second, to face down the murderous ideology that fueled bin Ladin's rise and that continues to incite violence around the world. To meet these challenges, our methods must match this unique moment. And we need to apply hard-learned lessons.

We have seen that precise and persistent force can significantly degrade even an enemy as elusive as al-Qaida. So we will continue to go after its leaders and commanders, disrupt their operations and bring them to justice.

But we've also learned that to truly defeat a terror network, we need to attack its finances, recruitment, and safe havens. We need to take on its ideology, counter its propaganda, and diminish its appeal, so that every community recognizes the threat that extremists pose to them

and they then deny them protection and support. And we need effective international partners in government and civil society who can extend this effort to all the places where terrorists operate.

To achieve these ends requires smart power, a strategy that integrates all our foreign policy tools – diplomacy and development hand-in-hand with defense – and that advances our values and the rule of law. We are waging a broad, sustained, and relentless campaign that harnesses every element of American power against terrorism. And even as we remain tightly focused on the terrorist network that attacked us 10 years ago, we're also thinking about the next 10 years and beyond, about the next threats, about that long-term ideological challenge that requires us to dig deeply into and rely upon our most cherished values.

I want to speak briefly about these elements of our strategy. First, the operational side: You all know about the bin Ladin raid. It was 10 years in coming. It was a great tribute to the thousands of Americans and others around the world who worked with us. The United States has made great strides over the past decade in capturing or killing terrorists and disrupting cells and conspiracies. In line with the recommendations of the 9/11 Commission, we've broken down bureaucratic walls so we can act on threats quickly and effectively. We've also taken steps to protect against new cyber dangers and to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction. That remains the gravest threat facing our country and the world. I will not go through all of our actions on this front.

We have talked about the necessity of bringing the world together around a common cause of preventing the proliferation of nuclear material into the hands of extremists. And President Obama held the first-ever Nuclear Security Summit to try to enlist leaders from across the world for this common goal. As we pursue our campaign on these various fronts, we will always maintain our right to use force against groups such as al-Qaida that have attacked us and still threaten us with imminent violence. In doing so, we will stay true to our values and respect the rule of law, including international law principles guiding the use of force in self-defense, respect for the sovereignty of other states, and the laws of armed conflict.

When we capture al-Qaida members, we detain them humanely and consistent with international standards. And when we do strike, we seek to protect innocent civilians from harm. Terrorists, of course, do exactly the opposite. And just as we will not shy away from using military force as needed, we will also use the full range of law enforcement tools. Those who argued in the past that the fight against terrorism was a military matter and not appropriate for law enforcement posed a false choice. It is and it must be both. Look at the superb work that the New York Police Department has done to keep this city safe over the last 10 years and the work they are doing again today.

This also means putting terrorists on trial in civilian courts, which have time and again shown their effectiveness at convicting terrorists, including many right here in New York, without endangering our local population. And we will use, where appropriate, reformed military commissions, because a lawful system that makes use of both civilian courts and reformed military commissions sends an important message to the world that the rule of law plays an essential role in confronting terrorism, and that it works.

In fact, the AP just did a recent study that there have been 120,000 arrests around the world in the last 10 years of terrorists, and 35,000 convictions. Thanks to our military intelligence and law enforcement efforts over the last decade, al-Qaida's leadership ranks have been devastated. Virtually every major affiliate has lost key operatives, including al-Qaida's number two just this last month.

But we must be clear about the threat that remains. Cities such as London and Lahore, Madrid, and Mumbai have been attacked since 9/11. Recently, Abuja was added to this list. Thousands of innocent people, the majority of whom are Muslims, have been killed. And we know, as

we have known for 10 years, that despite our best efforts, there is no such thing as perfect security. So while we have significantly weakened al-Qaida's core leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan, today we are reminded they can still conduct regional and international attacks and inspire others to do so. And the threat has become more geographically diverse, with much of al-Qaida's activity devolving to its affiliates around the world. I have long described al-Qaida as a syndicate of terror, not a monolith, and this is becoming truer every day.

For example, al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula is reaching far beyond its base in Yemen and seeking to carry out attacks like its attempts to bring down cargo and passenger planes bound for the United States. Other extremist groups in the border region of Afghanistan and Pakistan not only continue to protect al-Qaida's remaining leadership; they are plotting attacks like the failed Times Square bombing. And from Somalia, al-Shabaab is looking to carry out more strikes like last July's suicide bombings that killed 76 people in Uganda during the World Cup.

So even as we mark the progress we have achieved, which has been substantial since 9/11, we cannot afford to ignore these continuing dangers. We need to take a smart and strategic approach that recognizes that violent extremism is bound up with nearly all of today's other complex global problems. It can take root in zones of crisis and poverty, flourish under repression and in the absence of the rule of law, spark hatreds among communities that have lived side by side for generations, and exploit conflict within and between states.

These are all challenges that we face in the 21st century, and they demand global cooperation and, first and foremost, American leadership. So just as counterterrorism cannot be the sole focus of our foreign policy, it does not make sense to view counterterrorism in a vacuum. It must be integrated into our broader diplomatic and development agendas. And we should appreciate that while working to resolve conflicts, reduce poverty, and improve governance, those are valuable ends in themselves, but they also advance the cause of counterterrorism and national security. That is why I have more fully integrated the State Department and USAID into the fight.

We have emphasized innovation. For example, we are now using sophisticated new biometric screening tools to improve border security and the visa process, including electronic fingerprints, facial recognition, and on an experimental basis even iris scans.

We have renewed our alliances and forged new counterterrorism partnerships. Together, we are using all the tools in our arsenal to go after the support structure of al-Qaida, including finances, ideology, recruits, and safe havens.

This is not easy, of course, and we are clear-eyed about how much we can accomplish and how fast. But we will not stop until we do everything possible to prevent recruits and illegal transactions. And we will certainly not solve all the problems of every failed state, nor should we try. But we can make it harder for al-Qaida to fill its ranks and its coffers while ramping up pressure from new and more effective partners.

Let's look at finances, because we know illicit cash pays for terrorist training camps, propaganda, and operations. So cutting off the money is essential. It's a step toward shutting down the network itself. That's why the United States worked with scores of countries to put in place tough new legislation and help many of them disrupt illicit financial networks. Because of the successes that we've had in this area, terrorists are moving out of the formal financial system and increasingly funding their operations through criminal activity, especially kidnapping for ransom. Many of those ransoms have been paid by governments, which only encourages more kidnapping and undermines our counterterrorism efforts. So we are urging our partners around the world to embrace a no-concessions policy.

Even more than the money, what sustains al-Qaida and its affiliates is the steady flow of new recruits. They replace the terrorists we kill or capture, and they plan new attacks. Over the last 10 years, we've learned about how al-Qaida and its affiliates find these new members, about the process of radicalization, and the community dynamics that offer them support and protection. Slowing recruitment is a difficult task, but it begins by undermining extremist appeal. And it continues with highly targeted interventions in recruiting hot spots. That's one reason why the Administration has worked from its first days in office to restore our standing in the world, to bring our policies in line with our principles. This is not about winning a popularity contest. It's a simple fact that achieving our objectives is easier with more friends and fewer enemies.

One of the first things I did after arriving at the State Department was to appoint a special representative to Muslim communities around the world and to step up our engagement in the most crucial media spaces. We put our people - especially Arabic, Urdu, Dari speakers - on key channels like Al Jazeera and others to explain U.S. policies and counter at least some of the widespread misinformation out there. There was this idea that it was - it would be a waste of our time to go on channels and go onto websites to refute and rebut what was being said, but we're in a fight, and I'm not going to let people say things about us that are not true. If they want to say things about us that are true, we'll explain that. But to make up stuff, to be accusing us of things that are totally outlandish and outrageous, was just unacceptable. You're the only way we will get into the conversation where it matters most, and we have to show up. I sometimes get asked by members of Congress: I saw an American diplomat on X, Y, or Z; why? It's because that's where people are. That's where we need to be. I make no apologies for that.

It is with this in mind that we developed and launched the new Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, which is tightly focused on undermining the terrorist propaganda and dissuading potential recruits. The center is housed at the State Department, but is a true whole-of-government endeavor. It has a mandate from the President. And as part of this effort, a group of tech savvy specialists - fluent in Urdu and Arabic - that we call the digital outreach team are contesting online space, media websites and forums where extremists have long spread propaganda and recruited followers. With timely posts, often of independent news reports, this team is working to expose al-Qaida's and extremists' contradictions and abuses, including its continuing brutal attacks on Muslim civilians. This effort is still small, but it is now growing.

Take, for example, a short video clip that the team put together earlier this year. First, we hear a recording of al-Qaida's new leader, Zawahiri, claiming that peaceful action will never bring about change in the Middle East. Then we see footage of protests and celebrations in Egypt. The team posted this video on popular websites and stirred up a flurry of responses. Like "Zawahiri has no business with Egypt; we will solve our problems ourselves," wrote one commentator on the website Egypt Forum. Another on Facebook said those are people no one listens to anymore. Now, we won't change every mind with these tactics, but we know from extremists in our own country that they are recruited by and influenced by websites. So we're going to do everything we can to be in that fight for their minds and their hearts, and we are ratcheting up the pressure.

Now, this playbook is still being written. But the more we learn about al-Qaida's structure and methods, the more we have homed in on a number of specific recruiting hotspots, not just online but particular neighborhoods, villages, prisons, and schools. We have found that recruits tend to come in clusters, influenced by family and social networks. By focusing on these hotspots in cooperation with our partners, we can begin to disrupt the recruiting chain.

There is no silver bullet, to be sure, but the United States, especially USAID, has long experience with development projects that actually improve people's lives, create new economic opportunities, increase confidence in local communities. We have seen around the world, including in certain areas of Pakistan and Yemen, that this kind of work can begin diminishing the appeal of extremism.

This is a job that calls for a scalpel, not a sledgehammer. So we are pursuing micro-strategies that include credible local leaders and are driven by local needs and informed by local knowledge. For example, in the triangle between Kenya, Somalia, and Ethiopia where famine and conflict have opened the door to extremists, we are exploring a new partnership with the Kenya Muslim Youth Association. They will organize small learning circles around mainstream religious scholars, who will help provide counseling to young people who have been radicalized. This is a small project, one of many we're doing, but it's taking on a big challenge, and it's a start, and we will keep learning and adapting and keep convincing others to join with us.

Civil society and the private sector have important roles to play. Groups such as Sisters Against Violent Extremism, a group of women in 17 countries around the world who have risked their lives to tell terrorists that they are not welcome in their communities. They have written newspaper articles in Yemen, held workshops for young people in Indonesia, brought Indian and Pakistani women together to show a united front. These women know they will not stop extremism everywhere, but they refuse to sit on the sidelines. Local authorities and civil society often are better positioned than we are to provide services to their people, disrupt plots, and prosecute extremists, and they often bear the brunt of terrorist attacks.

Especially as a threat from al-Qaida becomes more diffuse, it is in the interest of the United States to forge closer ties with the governments and communities on the front lines and to help them build up their counterterrorism capacity. We need to expand our efforts to build an international counterterrorism network that is as nimble and adaptive as our adversaries'. So we have launched a diplomatic offensive to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation on counterterrorism. We have a broad and ambitious agenda, and to carry out this work, I am upgrading our office devoted to counterterrorism to a full-fledged bureau within the State Department.

Last year the State Department trained nearly 7,000 law enforcement and counterterrorism officials from more than 60 countries. Working with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, we have supported capacity building in Yemen, Pakistan, and other frontline states. Indonesia offers a good example of how this kind of partnership can pay off. When Jakarta decided to form an elite counterterrorism unit, the State Department provided training and equipment. Experts from the FBI and the Department of Justice shared their experience with police and prosecutors.

Indonesia's invigorated law enforcement effort has disrupted plots, tracked down, arrested, and in some cases, killed al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist leaders, including some of those responsible for the Bali bombing. And Indonesian prosecutors and courts have successfully tried and convicted hundreds of terrorists. We need to expand this cooperation worldwide. As the foreign minister of the UAE wrote yesterday, we need a comprehensive global mission to eradicate terrorism and violent extremism.

But until now, there's been no dedicated international venue to regularly convene key counterterrorism policy makers and practitioners from around the world. So later this month, we will take another significant step forward by establishing a new global counterterrorism forum. We're bringing together traditional allies, emerging powers, and Muslim-majority countries around a shared counterterrorism mission in a

way that's never been done before. Turkey and the United States will serve as founding co-chairs and we will be joined by nearly 30 other nations. Together, we will work to identify threats and weaknesses, devise solutions, mobilize resources, share expertise and best practices.

This will improve international coordination, but it will also help countries address terrorist threats within their own borders and regions. We will work to eliminate safe havens and identify the most effective messages to counter violence extremism. The forum will assist countries that are transitioning from authoritarian rule to democracy and the rule of law. It will provide support as they write new counterterrorism legislation and train police, prosecutors, and judges to apply the laws in keeping with universal human rights.

So as we deepen our bilateral and multilateral counterterrorism relationships, the United States has clear expectations for our partners. In some cases, by necessity, we are working with nations with whom we have very little in common except for our desire to defeat al-Qaida and terrorism. We make it a point to underscore our concerns about upholding universal rights. We demonstrate through our own example the effectiveness of doing so.

Unfortunately, some countries, even some friends, allow their territory to remain relatively permissive operating environments for terrorist financiers and facilitators. And yet some who undermine our work by fomenting anti-Western sentiment and exporting extremist ideologies to other Muslim communities even as they try to battle terrorists in their own country. Funding madrassas that preach violence and recruit terrorists, distributing textbooks that teach hate, will only accelerate the growth of extremism. This is like planting weeds in your garden and then acting surprised when they choke the flowers. It is counter-productive and ultimately self-defeating, and we will continue to argue against such practices in public and private. We will work with others to extend the success we have had in disrupting the financing of terrorism and will do all I can to try to make sure that more and more countries join this fight.

So all the efforts I have described – the pressure on al-Qaida's leaders, the campaign to deny it funding, recruits, and safe havens, the diplomatic effort to build local capacity and international cooperation – they have put al-Qaida on the defensive. But as important – in fact, even more important, I would argue – has been the blow delivered by the people themselves of the Middle East and North Africa. People across the region are charting a different course than the one that bin Ladin claimed was the only way forward. There is no better rebuke to al-Qaida and its hateful ideology. They are increasingly irrelevant in a region now more concerned with forming political parties than hearing another extremist rant.

It is true that the future is uncertain and it's still possibly going to be exploited by extremists. Security forces are distracted and disorganized. Weapons are missing. We know from experience that democratic transitions can be hijacked by new autocrats or derailed by sectarians. How this moment plays out, and what happens in these transitions, will have profound consequences for our long-term struggle against violent extremism.

But we believe that democracies are better equipped than autocracies to stand up against terrorism for the long term. They offer constructive outlets for political grievances, they create opportunities for upward mobility and prosperity that are clear alternatives to violent extremism, and they tend to have, over time, more effective governing institutions. So it is very much in the interest of the United States to support the development of strong and stable democracies in the region. That is what we are doing, and we are trying to assist both the people and the transitional governments to create economic opportunity and embrace the rule of law.

And it is equally important that the United States continues to live up to our own best values and traditions. The people of these nations are looking at us with fresh eyes, and we need to make sure they see us as a source of opportunity and hope, as a partner, not an adversary.

So as we stand here on the brink of the anniversary of 9/11, we can remember how the world rallied around us in our very difficult time. And we can recall that many were long accustomed to distrusting us, but they reacted on a human level to such an unimaginable crime. We came together as a nation, with a sense of purpose and unity. There were no lines dividing us. We celebrated our diversity – including the many contributions of Muslim Americans – and we showed deep compassion that has always been at the core of the American character.

Today the world is watching us again and seeing whether we will summon up that spirit, that core American spirit, to meet the many challenges that face us here at home and around the world. I am honored to represent our country in every place on the globe. America is exceptional. We are exceptional for our creativity and our openness. We draw people from everywhere. We are exceptional for our unwavering commitment to secure a more just and peaceful world, for our willingness, especially when it matters most, to put the common good ahead of ideology, party, or personal interest.

American leadership is still revered and required. And when old adversaries need an honest broker or fundamental freedoms need a champion, the international community looks to us. When a famine threatens the lives of millions in East Africa or floods sweep across Pakistan, people look to America. They see what we sometimes miss amid all the noise coming out of Washington: America is and remains a beacon of freedom, a guarantor of global security, a true opportunity society, a place to excel, a country of possibility where ideas hatched in a college dorm room can grow into a multibillion dollar business.

The source of our greatness is more durable than many people seem to realize. Yes, our military is by far the strongest and our economy is by far the largest. Our workers are the most productive. Our universities, like this one, are the gold standard. Our values are solid. But we have real challenges, and we have to step up and deal with them. But there should be no doubt that America has the capacity to grow our economy, solve our problems, and renew our global leadership.

Ultimately, this doesn't rest on the shoulders of a president or a secretary of state alone. It rests on the shoulders of the American people. We have to be ready to recapture that spirit of service and solidarity and to find the common ground that unites us as Americans. We have to be ready to recommit to the project of building our country together. I think we're prepared to believe that we have no limits to what we can achieve if we do just that. I believe we're ready.

But I also know that if we want to be the country that we believe in, that we find to be so attractive and aspirational, then we have to accept responsibility and we have to be ready, because more than the daring night raids or the successful prosecutions or the persistent diplomacy or the targeted development, what will keep us safe and keep us strong and keep us great is each of us signing on to be part of that American future.

Thank you all very much.

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