

30 June 2003

"U.S. Anti-Terrorism Strategy," by Raphael Perl

Following is an article adapted from a speech by Raphael Perl, a specialist in international affairs for the U.S. Congressional Research Service, to the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in Berlin, Germany, June 30. No republication restrictions.

United States Anti-Terrorism Strategy

By Raphael Perl

International Affairs Specialist, U.S. Congressional Research Service

It is indeed a pleasure to address your distinguished group on the topic of United States counter-terrorism strategy, an issue of growing concern to both our nations. In the United States and nations throughout the world, anti-terrorism policy is evolving and adapting to changes in the global environment and changes in the terrorist threat.

Today, I will frame my remarks by highlighting changes in the global environment that facilitate terrorism and alter the terrorist threat. I will then focus on key components and directions of U.S. anti-terrorism policy and the White House National Strategy for Combating Terrorism.

The Changing Global Security And Terrorist Threat Environment

The end of the cold war has increasingly brought with it a realization that the security environment had shifted dramatically:

- Weapons and technology that have been traditionally available only to nation states appear to be devolving to individuals and to transnational, or sub-national, groups and organizations;
- Individuals and disaffected groups are seeking, and might gain access to, weapons of mass destruction; and
- Globalization, free trade, and the expansion of democratic regimes provide opportunity for freer movement for terrorist and criminal groups worldwide.

Hand in hand with changes in the global security environment has come a recognition that terrorism is becoming more widespread, diffuse, and deadly.

It is widely recognized today that terrorism is becoming less territorially defined and more global in reach, and that it is becoming less overtly state-sponsored and more decentralized. Moreover, some suggest that terrorism is becoming more anonymous and that in the future it will be increasingly driven by global religious and ideological agendas.

How Is United States Policy Changing In Light Of The Changing Global

Landscape And Changes In The Terrorist Threat?

Let us examine some of the prominent characteristics of current U.S. anti-terrorism policy.

Current U.S. anti-terrorism policy is to a major degree pre-emptive, with top priority being given to threats from weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

President Bush made this clear in his May 21, 2003, remarks to the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. "We will not permit terror networks or terror states to threaten or blackmail the world with WMD."

A similar viewpoint was echoed by Secretary of State Colin Powell in an address on June 14, 2003, to the annual convention of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) in Washington.

Powell promised that the war against terrorism would remain unremitting and ultimately successful. "We will continue to work with our coalition partners to search out terrorists, smash their weapons, smash their networks, and freeze their finances. There will be no respite, no rest until terrorists and terrorism are defeated. And they will be defeated."

U.S. Policy Centers Around The Strategic Concept Of Defense-in-depth

The new global counter-terrorism strategy, released by the White House February 14, 2003, focuses on identifying and defusing threats before they reach U.S. borders. The strategy stresses that all instruments of U.S. power -- diplomatic, economic, law enforcement, financial, information dissemination, intelligence, and military -- are to be called upon. The strategy fits into the wider strategic concept of "defense-in-depth," which projects four concentric rings of defense against terrorist attack against the United States:

- The outermost ring consists of diplomatic, military, and intelligence organizations, operating mostly overseas. One goal of these organizations is to help pre-empt attacks on the U.S. homeland.
- Organizations such as the Customs Service, Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Coast Guard
- all of which were recently incorporated into the Department of Homeland Security
- constitute the next ring, which focuses on U.S. borders and the goods and people that cross them.
- The next ring includes federal, state, and local law enforcement "first responders" such as the fire service, and the National Guard. These operate for the most part within U.S. borders and are responsible for protecting towns and cities. Private citizens, who are being asked to report suspicious activity and take preventive action to reduce vulnerability to perilous situations, are part of this ring also.
- The final ring includes the private sector and federal agencies that play a key role in safeguarding the facilities that comprise critical physical infrastructures (e.g. transportation, financial, telecommunications, and energy systems). So we see a strategy based on pre-emption, with a focus on WMD, with a defense-

in-depth framework. The strategy also has a number of other central components.

The National Strategy For Combating Terrorism

To support this defense-in-depth framework, the "National Strategy for Combating Terrorism," a 30-page interagency document, was released by the White House on February 14, 2003. The National Strategy for Combating Terrorism is designed to complement other elements of the National Security Strategy, including sub-strategies for homeland security, weapons of mass destruction, cyberspace, critical infrastructure protection, and drug control. While the National Strategy for Homeland Security focuses on preventing terrorist attacks within the United States, the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism focuses on identifying and defusing threats before they reach U.S. borders. President Bush, in his comments accompanying release of the strategy, has stressed that all instruments of U.S. national power are being called upon to take the fight to the terrorists themselves.

While pre-emption and military force remain important components, the strategy recognizes that the war on terror will not be won on the military battlefield and gives strong policy emphasis to strategic long-term policy components such as law enforcement, public information campaigns, and economic development. Earlier draft versions of the strategy had placed even heavier emphasis on international law enforcement cooperation as a policy pillar.

The strategy details a desired end-state where the scope and capabilities of global terrorist organizations are downscaled to the extent that they become localized, unorganized, un-sponsored, and rare enough that they can be almost exclusively dealt with by criminal law enforcement. To accomplish this mission, emphasis is placed on international action by working with the willing, enabling the weak, persuading the reluctant, and compelling the unwilling. One outcome of the strategy is that economic development is formally enumerated as an important factor in reducing conditions that terrorists exploit. Arguably, the strategy also raises the priority of using information programs to de-legitimize terrorism.

Strategy Elements

The intent of the strategy is to stop terrorist attacks against the United States, its citizens, its interests, and U.S. friends and allies around the world. Creation of an international environment inhospitable to terrorists and their supporters is sought. The administration's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism is founded on four pillars -- defeating, denying, diminishing and defending to be simultaneously acted on four fronts, i.e.:

- Defeating terrorists together with U.S. allies by attacking their sanctuaries; leadership; command, control, and communications; material support; and finances. Components include: (1) identifying and locating terrorists by making optimal use of all intelligence sources, foreign and U.S., and (2) destroying terrorists and their organizations by capture and detention, use of military power, and through employment of specialized intelligence resources, as well as international cooperation to curb terrorist funding;
- Denying terrorists sponsorship, support, and sanctuary/safe havens. A central strategy objective is to ensure that other states take action against such

elements within their sovereign territory. Elements include:

- (1) tailoring strategies to induce individual state sponsors of terrorism to change policies;
 - (2) promoting international standards for combating terrorism;
 - (3) eliminating sanctuaries; and
 - (4) interdicting terrorist ground, air, maritime, and cyber traffic, in order to deny terrorists access to arms, financing, information, WMD materials, sensitive technology, recruits, and funding from illicit drug activities;
- Diminishing underlying conditions that terrorists exploit, by fostering economic, social, and political development, market-based economies, good governance, and the rule of law. Emphasis includes: (1) partnering with the international community to alleviate conditions leading to failed states that breed terrorism; and (2) using public information initiatives to de-legitimize terrorism; and
 - Defending U.S. citizens and interests at home and abroad to include protection of physical and cyber infrastructures.

Inherent In These Four Pillars Are The Following Components:

Intelligence component. A policy of pre-emption requires sound intelligence. The United States is currently involved in implementing measures designed to better merge domestic with foreign intelligence; law enforcement intelligence with national security intelligence.

Increasingly, U.S. counter-terrorism strategy incorporates a law enforcement component, subject however to restrictions found in the Posse Comitatus Act and reaffirmed in the Homeland Security Act which prohibit involvement of the military in domestic law enforcement. Central to the new National Strategy for Combating Terrorism is law enforcement cooperation. For example, since September 11, 2001, the FBI has initiated cooperative programs with Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia aimed at apprehending suspected terrorists and has shared expertise and technology with the law enforcement agencies of these nations.

U.S. counter-terrorism policy also has a strong economic component with both defensive and pre-emptive characteristics. On the defensive side of this economic component, much attention is being given to minimize disruption of the American economy by terrorists by protecting economic infrastructures. A major function of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] is to assess the vulnerability of critical infrastructures. Supporting such efforts is a growing use of risk analysis and threat matrixes.

On the pre-emptive side of the economic component, the Bush Administration has proposed a Millennium Challenge Account which would increase foreign economic assistance starting in fiscal year 2004 to a level which would be \$5 billion [\$5,000 million] higher by fiscal year 2006. Currently, U.S. economic aid worldwide totals \$12.87 billion [\$12,870 million]. Aid would go to countries that have demonstrated sound development practices and over time the new aid would be limited to countries with a per capita annual income of less than \$2,975.

Also evident is a growing counter-drug component. In the wake of the events of September 11th, the international community has placed emphasis on curbing financing of terrorists groups, and has dramatically enhanced efforts to limit and seize sources of terrorist funding. This has spawned renewed focus on the narcotics trade as a source of funding for such groups. Even in instances where groups do not actively work together, the synergy of their separate operations and shared efforts at destabilization pose an increasing threat.

And of course, there is a military component. This military component is reflected in the war in Iraq; U.S. operations in Afghanistan; deployment of U.S. forces around the Horn of Africa, to Djibouti, and the former Soviet Republic of Georgia; and ongoing military exercises in Colombia. President Bush has expressed a willingness to provide military aid to "governments everywhere" in the fight against terrorism. The U.S. is also undergoing a shift in overseas base locations to tactically support a more flexible strategy allowing for extended global military reach.

On the home front, U.S. policy increasingly has a homeland security focus. The newly created Department of Homeland Security is the biggest reorganization of the federal government in America's history, incorporating 22 government agencies and some 179,000 people into a single organization charged with coordinating the nation's domestic response to terrorism. The budget of the new department is roughly equal in amount to 10 percent of the nation's defense budget. For fiscal year 2003, 44 percent of federal law enforcement positions and 48 percent of federal law enforcement funding have been transferred to DHS.

Central to the U.S. government approach to combating terrorism is the issue of counter-proliferation with a strong emphasis on proactive counter-missile technology proliferation. In the words of Defense Secretary Rumsfeld in his June 11, 2003, address to the Marshall Center in Garmisch, Germany:

"If we are to deal with these new dangers, we need new tools of international cooperation, including new authorities to prevent -- and, if necessary, interdict -- the import, the export and the transshipment of weapons of mass destruction, ballistic missiles, and WMD-related materials from and between and to terrorist states. We also need to strengthen existing mechanisms for international security cooperation.

"We are working to transform our Department of Defense in the United States. And we are also working with our allies to help transform NATO from a 20th-century defensive alliance, into a 21st-century alliance capable of projecting power out of area, with leaner command structures, and a rapid response force that can deploy in days instead of months."

In a speech in Krakow, Poland, on May 31, 2003, President Bush proposed a Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) aimed at keeping WMD materials out of the hands of terrorists and rogue nations. Germany was one of 11 nations participating in a June 12, 2003, follow-up meeting in Madrid interested in changing international law to stop the spread such weapons.

Legislation is also currently pending in the U.S. Congress -- the Missile Threat Reduction Act of 2003 [HR 1950], which calls for a U.S.-led effort to seek a binding international instrument to restrict the trade of offensive ballistic missiles. Also called for is United States' sponsorship of a U.N. Security Council Resolution prohibiting U.N.

members from "purchasing, receiving, assisting or allowing transfer of" missile or missile- related equipment and technology from North Korea, and which would permit interdiction, seizure, or impoundment of North Korean missiles or related technology and equipment.

Conclusion:

The administration's National Strategy for Combating Terrorism continues to emphasize President Bush's counter-terrorism doctrine of pre-emptive deterrence. In what some interpret as an important policy declaration, the strategy links the goals of promoting economic development to those of reducing conditions that terrorists exploit. The degree to which funding will be committed to support this policy is yet to be determined, but if implemented, a policy adopting economic development linkages could have far-reaching implications on the structure and implementation of U.S. foreign aid programs, and possibly U.S. partnership support for multilateral assistance initiatives. Moreover, a law enforcement-focused approach, as envisioned by the National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, could be seen as less controversial by potential coalition members, and may lead to increased support for the administration's counter-terror policy.

Thank you.