

A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO WIN THE WAR AGAINST ISLAMIST TERROR

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL McCAUL
HOUSE HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Background

- As a follow up to Speaker Ryan's "**A Better Way**" national security agenda, Chairman McCaul released a new, common-sense national counterterrorism strategy (September 2016).
- **We are not winning the war against Islamist terror.** There are still more terrorist foot soldiers and safe havens than any time in modern history. They are leading an unprecedented wave of terror plotting here at home and abroad.
- **Today's threat environment equals—and in some ways exceeds—the pre-9/11 period.** We are safer from 9/11-style attacks, but our enemy has evolved. Terrorists are recruiting online, promoting "do-it-yourself" jihad, and hiding their plots using encrypted apps.
- **The White House has failed to lay out a clear plan for victory.** Our current counterterrorism approach is not working. It is designed to contain the threat, not roll it back once and for all.
- **That is why Chairman McCaul has produced a new strategy.** Fifteen years after 9/11, we have lost sight of what it takes to win this generational struggle, and we need a realistic plan to guide our efforts.

The McCaul strategy outlines how we can reverse the tide of terror.

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Overview

- **The McCaul strategy contains 100+ policy ideas and principles for fighting terrorism, across nine core objectives:**
 1. *Thwart attacks and protect our communities*
 2. *Stop recruitment and radicalization at home*
 3. *Keep terrorists out of America*
 4. *Take the fight to the enemy*
 5. *Combat terrorist travel and cut off financial resources*
 6. *Deny jihadists access to weapons of mass destruction*
 7. *Block terrorists from returning to the battlefield*
 8. *Prevent the emergence of new networks and safe havens*
 9. *Win the battle of ideas*
- **This counterterrorism strategy is different than those that came before it.** President Bush released a strategy for combating terrorism in 2003, and President Obama released one in 2011. Both are now outdated.
- **This strategy is written to keep pace with an evolving enemy.** It proposes ways to fight terror propaganda online; counter radicalization; deal with terrorists' use of encryption; and help communities protect against IEDs, active-shooters, and other terror tactics.
- **This strategy aims to bring our homeland security policies into the digital age.** It proposes to improve the screening of foreign visitors, immigrants, and refugees using new technologies and better intelligence—including from social media—to keep terrorists out.
- **This strategy focuses on breaking the Islamist terror *movement*—not just a single group.** The threat goes beyond ISIS and al Qaeda, and we must target Islamist terrorists regardless of their location or branding.
- **Bottom line: we cannot accept Islamist terror attacks as “the new normal.”** The McCaul strategy makes clear that we are facing a long, generational struggle, but we should wage it with the same resolve we showed in defeating other totalitarian ideologies, including fascism and communism.