

A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO WIN THE WAR AGAINST ISLAMIST TERROR

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Background

- **We are not winning the war against Islamist terror.** Despite some counterterrorism successes, there are still more terrorist foot soldiers and safe havens than any time in modern history. They are leading an unprecedented wave of violence that is pushing into the heart of the Western world, including here at home.
- **Today's threat environment equals—and in some ways exceeds—the 9/11 period.** We are safer from 9/11-style attacks, but our enemy has evolved. Terrorists are recruiting and promoting “do-it-yourself” jihad. They are also hiding their plots using secure communications.
- **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 document is not a partisan plan.** The ideas put forward in the McCaul strategy were developed in consultation with an array of national security experts on both sides of the aisle. They are common-sense solutions that should serve as a guide for Congress and the next president to better protect America.

Overview of the Strategy

- **The McCaul strategy contains 100+ policy ideas and principles for fighting terrorism.** Some are new, while others are forgotten policies we need to revive in order to protect America and its interests overseas against the surging terror threat.
- **The document is built around clear objectives: defend the homeland, defeat terrorists, and deny extremists the opportunity to reemerge.** It presents nine counterterrorism priorities, or “means,” needed to achieve these “ends,” including:
 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*

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Overview of the Strategy (cont.)

- **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 terrorist propaganda online; counter homegrown radicalization; deal with terrorists' use of encryption; and help communities better protect against IEDs, active shooter plots, and other changing 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 from infiltrating our country.
 - ***This strategy focuses on breaking the Islamist terror movement—not just defeating one group.*** Our nation's last official counterterrorism strategy focused almost exclusively on al Qaeda, leaving us blind to the rise of ISIS. This plan is designed to target Islamist terrorists, regardless of their location or branding.
- **The bottom line is this: we cannot accept Islamist terror attacks as “the new normal.” We must defeat the perpetrators.** 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 communism and fascism.