

## 'We promote our values by living them' - US administration's report

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Editor's note: The following are excerpts from US President Barack Obama's National Security Report. The 52-page report, which was released by the White House on May 27, states the Obama administration's national security goals. Its principal author is Ben Rhodes, deputy national security adviser.

From the US president's introduction

In all that we do, we will advocate for and advance the basic rights upon which our nation was founded, and which peoples of every race and region have made their own. We promote these values by living them, including our commitment to the rule of law. We will strengthen international norms that protect these rights, and create space and support for those who resist repression. Our commitment to human dignity includes support for development, which is why we will fight poverty and corruption. And we reject the notion that lasting security and prosperity can be found by turning away from universal rights – democracy does not merely represent our better angels, it stands in opposition to aggression and injustice, and our support for universal rights is both fundamental to American leadership and a source of our strength in the world.

As a nation made up of people from every race, region, faith, and culture, America will persist in promoting peace among different peoples and believes that democracy and individual empowerment need not come at the expense of cherished identities. Indeed, no nation should be better positioned to lead in an era of globalization than America – the nation that helped bring globalization about, whose institutions are designed to prepare individuals to succeed in a competitive world, and whose people trace their roots to every country on the face of the Earth.

From the Report

Advancing Top National Security Priorities

Just as our national security strategy is focused on renewing our leadership for the long term, it is also facilitating immediate action on top priorities. This administration has no greater

responsibility than the safety and security of the American people. And there is no greater threat to the American people than weapons of mass destruction, particularly the danger posed by the pursuit of nuclear weapons by violent extremists and their proliferation to additional states.

That is why we are pursuing a comprehensive nonproliferation and nuclear security agenda, grounded in the rights and responsibilities of nations. We are reducing our nuclear arsenal and reliance on nuclear weapons, while ensuring the reliability and effectiveness of our deterrent. We are strengthening the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as the foundation of nonproliferation, while working through the NPT to hold nations like Iran and North Korea accountable for their failure to meet international obligations. We are leading a global effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear materials from terrorists. And we are pursuing new strategies to protect against biological attacks and challenges to the cyber networks that we depend upon.

As we secure the world's most dangerous weapons, we are fighting a war against a far-reaching network of hatred and violence. We will disrupt, dismantle, and defeat Al-Qaeda and its affiliates through a comprehensive strategy that denies them safe haven, strengthens front-line partners, secures our homeland, pursues justice through durable legal approaches, and counters a bankrupt agenda of extremism and murder with an agenda of hope and opportunity. The frontline of this fight is Afghanistan and Pakistan, where we are applying relentless pressure on Al-Qaeda, breaking the Taliban's momentum, and strengthening the security and capacity of our partners. In this effort, our troops are again demonstrating their extraordinary service, making great sacrifices in a time of danger, and they have our full support.

In Iraq, we are transitioning to full Iraqi sovereignty and responsibility – a process that includes the removal of our troops, the strengthening of our civilian capacity, and a long-term partnership to the Iraqi government and people. We will be unwavering in our pursuit of a comprehensive peace between Israel and its neighbors, including a two-state solution that ensures Israel's security, while fulfilling the Palestinian peoples' legitimate aspirations for a viable state of their own. And our broader engagement with Muslim communities around the world will spur progress on critical political and security matters, while advancing partnerships on a broad range of issues based upon mutual interests and mutual respect (...)

#### Promote Democracy and Human Rights Abroad

Yet after an era that saw substantial gains for these values around the world, democratic development has stalled in recent years. In some cultures, these values are being equated with the ugly face of modernity and are seen to encroach upon cherished identities. In other countries, autocratic rulers have repressed basic human rights and democratic practices in the name of economic development and national unity. Even where some governments have adopted democratic practices, authoritarian rulers have undermined electoral processes and restricted the space for opposition and civil society, imposing a growing number of legal restrictions so as to impede the rights of people to assemble and to access information. And while there has been substantial progress in combating poverty in many parts of the world, too many of the world's people still lack the dignity that comes with the opportunity to pursue a better life (...)

The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate. We also do so because their success abroad fosters an environment that supports America's national interests. Political systems that protect universal rights are ultimately more stable, successful, and secure. As our history shows, the United States can more effectively forge consensus to tackle shared challenges when working with governments that reflect the will and respect the rights of their

people, rather than just the narrow interests of those in power. The United States is advancing universal values by:

**Ensuring that New and Fragile Democracies Deliver Tangible Improvements for Their Citizens:** The United States must support democracy, human rights, and development together, as they are mutually reinforcing. We are working closely with citizens, communities, and political and civil society leaders to strengthen key institutions of democratic accountability – free and fair electoral processes, strong legislatures, civilian control of militaries, honest police forces, independent and fair judiciaries, a free and independent press, a vibrant private sector, and a robust civil society. To do so, we are harnessing our bilateral and multilateral capabilities to help nascent democracies deliver services that respond to the needs and preferences of their citizens, since democracies without development rarely survive.

**Practicing Principled Engagement with Non-Democratic Regimes:** Even when we are focused on interests such as counterterrorism, nonproliferation, or enhancing economic ties, we will always seek in parallel to expand individual rights and opportunities through our bilateral engagement. The United States is pursuing a dual-track approach in which we seek to improve government-to-government relations and use this dialogue to advance human rights, while engaging civil society and peaceful political opposition, and encouraging US non-governmental actors to do the same. More substantive government-to-government relations can create permissive conditions for civil society to operate and for more extensive people-to-people exchanges. But when our overtures are rebuffed, we must lead the international community in using public and private diplomacy, and drawing on incentives and disincentives, in an effort to change repressive behavior.

**Recognizing the Legitimacy of All Peaceful Democratic Movements:**

America respects the right of all peaceful, law-abiding, and nonviolent voices to be heard around the world, even if we disagree with them. Support for democracy must not be about support for specific candidates or movements. America will welcome all legitimately elected, peaceful governments, provided they govern with respect for the rights and dignity of all their people and consistent with their international obligations. Those who seek democracy to obtain power, but are ruthless once they do, will forfeit the support of the United States. Governments must maintain power through consent, not coercion, and place legitimate political processes above party or narrow interest (...)

In Sudan, which has been marred by violent conflict for decades, the United States remains committed to working with the international community to support implementation of outstanding elements of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and ensure that the referendum on the future of Southern Sudan in 2011 happens on time and that its results are respected. In addition, we will continue to engage in the efforts necessary to support peace and stability after the referendum, and continue to work to secure peace, dignity, and accountability in Darfur.

- **Prevent Genocide and Mass Atrocities:** The United States and all member states of the UN have endorsed the concept of the "Responsibility to Protect." In so doing, we have recognized that the primary responsibility for preventing genocide and mass atrocity rests with sovereign governments, but that this responsibility passes to the broader international community when sovereign governments themselves commit genocide or mass atrocities, or when they prove unable or unwilling to take necessary action to prevent or respond to such crimes inside their borders. The United States is committed to working with our allies, and to strengthening our own internal capabilities, in order to ensure that the United States and the international community are proactively engaged in a strategic effort to prevent mass atrocities and genocide. In the event that prevention fails, the United States will work both multilaterally and

bilaterally to mobilize diplomatic, humanitarian, financial, and – in certain instances – military means to prevent and respond to genocide and mass atrocities.

- International Justice: From Nuremberg to Yugoslavia to Liberia, the United States has seen that the end of impunity and the promotion of justice are not just moral imperatives; they are stabilizing forces in international affairs. The United States is thus working to strengthen national justice systems and is maintaining our support for ad hoc international tribunals and hybrid courts. Those who intentionally target innocent civilians must be held accountable, and we will continue to support institutions and prosecutions that advance this important interest. Although the United States is not at present a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and will always protect US personnel, we are engaging with State Parties to the Rome Statute on issues of concern and are supporting the ICC's prosecution of those cases that advance US interests and values, consistent with the requirements of US law.

The report can be found in full on:

[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss\\_viewer/national\\_security\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf)