A 21ST CENTURY MILITARY FOR AMERICA

BARACK OBAMA ON DEFENSE ISSUES

Before the 2000 election, George Bush and Dick Cheney famously told our military "Help is on the way." Today, the active Army is short 3,000 captains and majors, and 58 percent of recent West Point graduates are choosing to leave the force – double the historic average. We do not have a single combat brigade at home in reserve, ready for an unexpected crisis. Our National Guard and Reserves have only half the equipment levels they need, hampering their ability to respond to crises, foreign and domestic.

Ending the war in Iraq will be the beginning, but not the end, of addressing our defense challenges. Terrorist networks with a global reach and aspirations to weapons of mass destruction threaten our security. Failing states half a world away can provide safe harbor for terrorists and destabilize entire regions. Extreme regimes, like Iran and North Korea, threaten their neighbors, proliferate nuclear technology, and support terrorists while rising powers like China hold the potential to be either partners or adversaries. And most importantly, nations around the globe are reluctant to join with America in taking on mutual threats because they question our own commitment to democracy, justice, peace, and opportunity.

The defense policies detailed here represent one aspect of Barack Obama's comprehensive, rigorous approach to advancing American national security and foreign policy. His initiatives on diplomacy and development (detailed in separate fact sheet available on barackobama.com) combined with his defense policies will create a stronger America and a safer world.

America simply cannot afford more of the old approach to our national defense. Instead, we need a commander in chief with the right combination of judgment, vision, and leadership for the new century's challenges. We must have a 21st century military recruited, trained, organized, and equipped to succeed in the new security environment. To achieve this, we need a new administration with a 21st century vision—an Obama administration, determined to face our global challenges and dedicated to supporting the selfless and brave armed forces serving our nation.

As our next president, Barack Obama will:

- End the war in Iraq
- Reestablish the proper leadership role of the commander in chief for the 21st century
- Place 'people first,' so our military can recruit and retain the forces it needs and our servicemembers and their families are treated with the respect and appreciation they deserve
- Rebuild our National Guard and Reserves, to be better prepared to respond at home and abroad
- Focus on adapting and building U.S. military capabilities for current, not Cold War, needs
- Restore our global partnerships, to leverage the capabilities of others and win the 'war of ideas'
- Build civilian capacity to promote stability and tackle security challenges with a 'whole of government'

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approach, so that our troops are not alone in the fight
- Place our troops before CEOs, reigning in military outsourcing and restoring honesty, openness, and economic good sense to our defense contracting and budgeting processes.

1) Ending the war in Iraq

"I will remove one or two brigades a month, and get all of our combat troops out of Iraq within 16 months. The only troops I will keep in Iraq will perform the limited missions of protecting our diplomats and carrying out targeted strikes on al Qaeda. And I will launch the diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives that are so badly needed. Let there be no doubt: I will end this war." – Barack Obama, Chicago, October 2, 2007

The war in Iraq has put a severe strain on our armed forces and set back our security. The first priority for Barack Obama when he is elected President will be ending the war in Iraq.

Obama Plan to End the War: Barack Obama will immediately give his military commanders a new mission in Iraq: ending the war. He will immediately begin to remove our combat brigades from Iraq. He will remove troops at a pace of 1 to 2 brigades a month, and have all of our combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months. And he will maintain a force in Iraq or the region with two tightly focused missions: guarding our embassy and diplomats, and targeting al Qaeda inside Iraq. During our drawdown, Obama will launch aggressive initiatives to press for reconciliation within Iraq, to achieve a new regional compact on stability in Iraq and the Middle East, and to address Iraq's humanitarian crisis.

Reset Our Military: As Obama removes our combat brigades from Iraq, he will send at least two additional brigades to Afghanistan, where the Taliban is resurgent. He will also provide our armed forces with the reset capability that they need. He will replace essential equipment, and he will ensure that our men and women in uniform get the care and support they have earned.

2) The Role of a 21st Century Commander-In-Chief

American military power is sustained by the patriotism of those who serve in uniform. They deserve the same commitment from their leaders. As president, Barack Obama will:

Make Wise, Informed Judgments About When to Send Our Troops into Harm's Way: The gravest decision that the president makes is when to use force. On the most important judgment of of our generation, Barack Obama got it right when he opposed the war in Iraq. Obama believes that when we send our men and women into harm's way, we must also clearly define the mission, prescribe concrete political and military objectives, seek out the advice of our military commanders, carefully evaluate the intelligence, plan accordingly, and ensure that our troops have the resources, support, and equipment they need to protect themselves and fulfill their mission,

Strengthen Civil-Military Relations: Barack Obama will establish sound, strategic leadership at the White House and the Pentagon and restore mutual respect and a common sense of purpose in civil-military relations. In recent years, dysfunction between civilian and military leaders has failed our nation. While those in uniform must follow the orders of their civilian leaders, they deserve civilian leadership that seeks and respects the counsel of uniformed professionals. As Commander-in-Chief, Barack Obama will draw upon the vital expertise of military leaders and will have a Defense Secretary who appreciates the counsel of the professional military.

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Lead with Responsibility and Accountability: Presidents take responsibility for their decisions. As Harry Truman famously said about his Oval Office desk, "The buck stops here." A commander in chief does not imply that the military is responsible for his administration's command mistakes. Second, military leaders and senior national security officials should be assigned to positions and held accountable for performance based on their abilities, not in accord with political preferences or to reward loyalty. Finally, in the rare instances of wrongdoing (for example at Abu Ghraib), senior leaders should face the same accountability as enlisted personnel and junior officers. Malfeasance will occur, but can be corrected only by ensuring real accountability.

Act Multilaterally When We Can, Unilaterally Only When We Must: Barack Obama believes that No president should ever hesitate to use force – unilaterally if necessary – to protect America and our vital interests when we are attacked or imminently threatened. But when we use force in situations other than self-defense, we should make every effort to garner the clear support and participation of others – the kind of burden-sharing and support President George H.W. Bush rallied before he launched Operation Desert Storm.

3) Invest in a 21st Century Military

"Our country's greatest military asset is the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States." Barack Obama, Chicago Foreign Affairs Council, April 23, 2007

For all the photo opportunities and bluster, George Bush will leave our nation with a crisis in military readiness. Our service men and women are being strained by repeated and lengthy deployments, and by missions for which they are still inadequately organized, trained, and equipped. Negative trends in recruitment and retention threaten the strength of the all-volunteer force. In allowing this to occur, President Bush is repeating mistakes made at the end of the Vietnam War that "hollowed out" our force. An Obama administration will rebuild a military that has been pushed to the breaking point.

Expand to Meet Military Needs on the Ground: A major stress on our troops comes from insufficient ground forces. Barack Obama supports plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 troops and the Marines by 27,000 troops. Increasing our end strength will help units retrain and re-equip properly between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.

Solve Recruitment and Retention Problems: A nation of 300 million strong should not be struggling to find enough qualified citizens to serve. Recruiting and retention problems have been swept under the rug by lowering standards and using the "Stop Loss" program to keep our servicemen and women in the force after their enlistment has expired. Even worse, the burdens of fixing these problems have been placed on the shoulders of young recruiting sergeants, instead of leadership in Washington. America needs a leader who can inspire today's youth to serve our nation the same way President Kennedy once did—reaching out to youth, as well as the parents, teachers, coaches, and community and religious leaders who influence them. Barack Obama will make it a presidential imperative to restore the ethic of public service to the agenda of today's youth, whether it be serving their local communities in such roles as teachers or first responders, or serving in the military and reserve forces or diplomatic corps that keep our nation free and safe.

Rebuild the Military for 21st-Century Tasks: As we rebuild our armed forces, we must meet the full-spectrum needs of the new century, not simply recreate the military of the Cold War era. In particular, we must focus on strengthening the ground force units and skills that military officers have dubbed "High Demand/Low Density." The U.S. military must:

- Build up our special operations forces, civil affairs, information operations, engineers, foreign area officers, and other units and capabilities that remain in chronic short supply.

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- Invest in foreign language training, cultural awareness, and human intelligence and other needed counterinsurgency and stabilization skillsets.

- Create a specialized military advisors corps, which will enable us to better build up local allies' capacities to take on mutual threats.

Guarantee Our Ground Forces Have the Proper Training for New Challenges: Obama is a co-sponsor of the Webb-Hagel plan to ensure that Soldiers and Marines have sufficient training time before they are sent into battle. This is not the case at the moment, where American forces are being rushed to Iraq and Afghanistan, often with less individual and unit training than is required.

Ensure the Care and Dignity of Our Troops When They Come Home: As the shameful events at Walter Reed hospital and the recent reports on growing numbers of homeless and unemployed veterans show, we are not taking proper care of our wounded warriors and veterans. As a grandson of a World War II veteran who went to college on the G.I. Bill, and as a member of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs, Barack Obama has fought to improve care for troops recovering from injuries, to combat homelessness among veterans, and to make the disability benefits process more equitable. He is also the sponsor of the Wounded Warrior bill to improve care for wounded troops recovering at military hospitals. In August, Obama laid out his comprehensive plan as president to build a 21st-century Department of Veterans Affairs, so that we will be able to uphold America's sacred trust with our veterans.

Lift the Onerous Burdens on Our Troops and Their Families: Our military is built on families, and troops decide whether to re-enlist based largely on how their families are faring. We must better support those families of whom we are asking so much. An Obama administration will:

- **Create a Military Families Advisory Board**: Consisting of experts and family representatives from each service, it would help identify and develop actionable policies to ease the burden on spouses and families. The board would provide an institutionalized conduit (presently missing) for the evolving concerns of military families to be brought to the attention of senior policymakers and the public.

- **Work to Bring Pay Parity:** more in line with that of the private sector, as measured by the employment cost index (ECI).

- **End the "Back Door Draft" policies:** that allow an individual to be forced to remain on active duty after his or her enlistment has expired.

- **Establish regularity in deployments:** so that active duty and reserves know what they must expect, rather than the current trend of changing the deployment schedules after they have left home, which harms the morale of troops and their families.

Repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell": It is time to put national security above divisive politics. More than 10,000 service men and women have been discharged for sexual orientation since the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was implemented, at a cost of over $360 million. Many of those forced out had special skills in high demand, such as Arabic translators, engineers and pilots. At a time when the military is having a tough time recruiting and retaining troops, it is wrong to deny our country the service of brave, qualified people. As president, Obama will repeal Don't Ask Don't Tell.

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"Anybody who is willing to serve our country and die on a battlefield for us and are patriots, that's the criteria for whether or not they should be able to serve in our military," Barack Obama, Charles City, IA, Oct. 5, 2007

4) Restore the Readiness of America's National Guard and Reserves

"We cannot accept second-class care for the brave men and women of the Guard and Reserves. They fight in the same war as their active-duty compatriots. They must not slip through holes in our safety net when they return to civilian life." Barack Obama, Waterloo, Iowa, October 3, 2007

Like their active-duty counterparts, the National Guard and Reserves have been stretched thin by the administration's flawed strategy, diverted from critical homeland security missions, and under-resourced. As President, Barack Obama will:

Restore the Deployment Policies Under Which the Reserve and Guard Enlisted: America should recommit to the broken promises made to the men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserves. An Obama administration will:

- Limit lengthy deployments to one year for every six years,
- Restore the 24-month limit on cumulative deployment time,
- End the "Stop-Loss" program of forcing troops to stay in service beyond their expected commitments.

Ensure the Guard and Reserves Can Meet their Homeland Security Missions: The poor readiness of America's Guard and Reserve forces threatens our ability to respond to natural disasters or terrorist attacks at home. We saw this, sadly, after both Hurricane Katrina and the tornadoes in Kansas. Because of the depletion of its resources in Iraq, the National Guard is less ready today than it was on 9/11. Nearly 90 percent of units have serious equipment shortages; many have less than 1/3 of the equipment they require. A particular focus of Obama's plan will be to reverse the trend of "cross-leveling," the cannibalizing of soldiers and machines from units back home for missions abroad.

Make the Reserve and National Guard Components Whole: Today, the selected Reserve makes up 37 percent of the total force, but only receives 3 percent of the equipment funding and 8 percent of total DOD budget. Barack Obama will resource and equip the Reserve and Guard to meet their missions not only overseas and, but also at home. Barack Obama's administration will consult regularly with governors of the 50 states on the needs of their Guard units.

Give the Guard a Seat at the Table: Too often, top-level military decisions, which impact the National Guard, are made without its input. Obama cosponsored legislation to elevate the Chief of the National Guard to the rank of four-star general and make the chief a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the top military advisory panel to the president. As president, Obama will sign this legislation into law.

Treat our Citizen Soldiers with the Respect They Deserve: In a 2007 survey, 50 percent of employers report that they are now less likely to hire reservists. As President, Barack Obama will:

- Fight Guard/Reserves Employment discrimination. Unlike what is happening today, Barack Obama will not allow his Justice Department to ignore the ongoing abuse of reservists' employment rights

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- Ensure that reservists and Guard members are treated fairly when it comes to employment, health, and education benefits, including ensuring that they can keep the education benefits that they gain while in service (currently, reservists must forfeit them, once their active deployment time ends).

Help Military Families Cope with Deployments: When a guardsman or reservist is called away for active duty, their spouses have to make a tremendous transition and often struggle to balance work and family obligations. Barack Obama will expand Family Medical Leave to include reserve families facing mobilization. This will allow workers whose spouse is called to active duty to get their affairs in order, without losing their jobs.

Improve Transition Services: As president, Obama will ensure that the military and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) coordinate to provide a truly seamless transition for service members from military to civilian life, including for reservists. Obama's plan will be modeled on legislation he introduced to standardize electronic records for active duty and transitioned them intact to the VA upon separation and to enhance military and VA outreach to separating members of the National Guard and Reserves. An Obama administration will also:

- **Make Mental Health Services a Priority.** Veterans coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan are reporting record levels of problems stemming from the after-effects of combat stress (49 percent in one survey), but only 3 states have a psychological coordinator to serve local Reserve and Guard vets in need. Obama will ensure that veterans in all 50 states have this support and that baseline screening happens while they are on active duty (this will both ensure early outreach for those in need, as well as ensure reservist rights in any disability hearings).
- **Extend the Window for New Veterans:** to enroll in the VA from two years to five years, because adjustments back to civilian life take time.
- **Expand Vet Centers in Rural Areas:** so that veterans and their families can get the care they need where they live.

5) Build Defense Capabilities for the 21st Century

"We must use this moment both to rebuild our military and to prepare it for the missions of the future." Barack Obama, Foreign Affairs magazine, July 2007

For all the "transformation," our budgeting for military hardware remains focused on weapons systems that deal with threats from the past, inadequately addressing current needs and the changing security environment. Even worse, many of these multi-billion systems will not be available for decades, when our troops need support today. An Obama administration will:

Fully Equip Our Troops for the Missions They Face: We must listen to our ground commanders when they tell us what kinds of technology and skills they need to fight most effectively. We cannot repeat the failure to swiftly deploy up-armored vehicles in response to insurgent tactics. We must prioritize getting vitally needed equipment to our Soldiers and Marines before lives are lost.

Review Weapons Programs: Each major defense program will be reevaluated in light of current needs, gaps in the field, and likely future threat scenarios in the post 9-11 world. We must rebalance our capabilities to ensure that our forces can succeed in both conventional war-fighting and in stabilization and counter-insurgency operations.

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Preserve Global Reach in the Air: We must preserve our unparalleled airpower capabilities to deter and defeat any conventional competitors, swiftly respond to crises across the globe, and support our ground forces. Airpower is critical to American security, but relying solely on old systems from a past century will not suffice.

We must adapt and make tradeoffs among systems originally designed for the Cold War and those required for current and future challenges. We need greater investment in advanced technology ranging from the revolutionary, like unmanned aerial vehicles and electronic warfare capabilities, to systems like the C-17 cargo and KC-X air refueling aircraft—which may not be glamorous to politicians, but are the backbone of our future ability to extend global power.

Maintain Power Projection at Sea: The sea remains vital for global commerce and as a security domain, offering access in times of crises and enabling the United States to sustain global partnerships. Along with our maritime partners, we must ensure that potential ocean choke points remain open, protect the undersea fiber optic network that powers globalization, and protect the growing percentage of global energy supplies derived from offshore, undersea fields. Unconventional threats also require improving our ability to patrol and protect the "brown" waters of river systems important to our friends and allies and the "green" waters close to our shores. As we redeploy more and more of out troops home to the continental United States, maintaining "command of the seas" and joint "sea basing" capabilities will be more important than ever. We must recapitalize our naval forces, replacing aging ships and modernizing existing platforms, while adapting them to the 21st century.

To maintain the size of the fleet at an affordable cost, Obama will modernize the many capable ships that we now have and tilt the investment balance towards more capable, smaller combatants, while maintaining the Navy's ability to command the seas. He will support sea basing ships capable of support humanitarian missions as well as combat mission. He will increase investment in riverine craft and small coastal patrol craft, and ensure the maximum interoperability between the Navy and the Coast Guard. Obama endorses the concept of the Littoral Combat Ship, with its modular design to meet changing needs. However, the process to build the ship was flawed, and indicative of a broader failure in the Navy's acquisition process. As part of it overall defense reforms, Obama administration will prioritize fixing the naval acquisitions system. He will also work to maintain the shipbuilding design and industrial bases, and support increased R&D for naval forces.

Defend Against Nuclear Attack, the Smart Way: In a world with nuclear weapons, America must continue efforts to defend against the mass destruction of its citizens and our allies. But past efforts were both wasteful and ineffective, pursued with neither honesty nor realism about their costs and shortfalls. We must seek a nuclear missile defense and demand that those efforts use resources wisely to build systems that would actually be effective. Missile defense requires far more rigorous testing to ensure that it is cost-effective and, most importantly, will work. Barack Obama has been a leader to ensure that we are investing in sound defenses not merely against missiles, but also against the more likely scenarios of attack, via 'loose nukes' and the terrorist delivering a weapons of mass destruction to the United States. Finally, our deployment of missile defense systems should be done in a way that reinforces, rather than undercuts, our alliances, involving partnership and burdensharing with organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Obama Will Set Goal of Nuclear-Free World: Barack Obama will set a new direction and show the world that America believes in the commitment made under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty to work to ultimately eliminate nuclear stockpiles. Obama has said that America will not disarm unilaterally. Indeed, as long as nuclear weapons exist, the United States will retain a strong nuclear deterrent, but Obama will set new course for our nation and the world to reduce reliance on these weapons and prevent them from getting into dangerous hands – whether they are states or terrorists.

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Obama Will Secure Nuclear Weapons Materials in Four Years: Barack Obama will lead a global effort to secure all nuclear weapons materials at vulnerable sites within four years – the most effective way to prevent terrorists from acquiring a nuclear bomb. Barack Obama will work with Russia to make sure nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons materials in Russia and around the world are secured. He will work with other countries to develop and implement a comprehensive set of standards to protect nuclear materials from theft. He also will increase the pace at which nuclear security detectors are placed at key border crossings.

Obama Will Work with Russia to Take Nuclear Weapons off Hair-Trigger Alert: The United States and Russia have thousands of nuclear weapons on hair-trigger alert. Barack Obama believes that we should take our nuclear weapons off hair-trigger alert – something that George W. Bush promised to do when he was campaigning for president in 2000. Maintaining this Cold War stance today is unnecessary and increases the risk of an accidental or unauthorized nuclear launch. As president, Obama will work with Russia to find common ground and bring significantly more weapons off hair-trigger alert.

Obama Will Negotiate to Dramatically Reduce Nuclear Stockpiles: With thousands and thousands of nuclear weapons on each side, both the United States and Russia have not made sufficient progress to reduce the size of their nuclear arsenals. This has undermined their commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and their efforts to secure and reduce the spread of nuclear weapons and materials around the world. Barack Obama will start by verifiably ending production of fissile material for weapons and by gaining agreement not to build new weapons. He will seek deep cuts with Russia and other nuclear powers to reduce global stockpiles dramatically by the end of his presidency.

Protect the U.S in Cyberspace: The 21st century also may see new domains of conflict. Given the huge reliance of our nation, and the wider global economy, on commerce, communications, and critical infrastructure that link to the virtual world, we must anticipate and prepare to defend against potential attacks. An Obama administration will work in cooperation with our allies and the private sector toward identifying and protecting against emerging cyber-threats.

Ensure Freedom of Space: America's ability to use space as a location for its satellites and communications grid is critical to our national security and economy. Unfortunately, this issue has been ignored and many nations are preparing to threaten space as a commons available to all nations. An Obama administration will:

- Restore U.S. leadership on space issues by seeking code of conduct for space-faring nations, including a worldwide ban on weapons to interfere with satellites and a ban on testing anti-satellite weapons. Initiating and stating a willingness to participate in a regime protecting access to space will help the United States return to a position of leadership in promoting global stability.

- Thoroughly assess possible threats to U.S. space assets and the best options, military and diplomatic, for countering them. This will include establishing contingency plans to ensure that U.S. forces can maintain or duplicate access to information from space assets and accelerating programs to harden U.S. satellites against attack.

<u>6) Develop Additional Tools to Promote Global Stability</u>:

"*I will increase both the numbers and capabilities of our diplomats, development experts, and other civilians who can work alongside our military. We can't just say there is no military solution to these problems. We need to integrate all aspects of American might*." – Barack Obama, Washington, D.C. August 1, 2007

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We have inherited a national security organizational structure that was developed and organized in the late 1940s to win the Cold War. It remains a rigid bureaucracy of government agencies, relying upon a restrictive and stovepiped set of legal authorities, with far greater operational capacity to destroy than to build other nations. Confronting the security challenges of the 21st century requires not just defeating armed enemies, but becoming a force for stability and opportunity throughout the world.

One of the best ways to support the brave men and women in our armed forces is to address the great imbalance in our executive branch capacity for dealing with 21st-century challenges that aren't of a purely military nature. While many of these policies are detailed in Obama's foreign policy initiatives, some demand inclusion in Obama's vision of national defense. An Obama administration will:

- **Establish an Expeditionary Capability:** within non-Pentagon agencies (State Department, US Agency for International Development, Homeland Security, Justice, Treasury, Agriculture, and Health and Human Services, etc.) to deploy personnel where they are needed. These civilians will be integrated with, and sometimes operate independently from, our military expeditionary capabilities. This will help move troops out of civilian roles, as well as bring in the experts with the right expertise and skills.

- **Create a Civilian Assistance Corps (CAC):** There is presently no mechanism for civilians with special skill-sets (be they doctors, lawyers, engineers, city planners, agriculture specialists, police, etc.) and a sense of service, to be trained and organized to help their nation when it needs them. The Civilian Assistance Corps (modeled after similar auxiliary groups in Virginia and California) would provide each federal agency a pool of volunteer experts willing to deploy in crises. They would be pre-trained and screened for deployment to supplement departments' expeditionary teams. The creation of such a corps would ensure that true experts carry out tasks such as restoring electricity or creating banking systems, rather than the current practice of expecting already over-burdened soldiers to assume these roles. An Obama administration will set a goal of creating a national CAC of 25,000 personnel.

7) Build Partnerships and Leverage Capacity at Home and Abroad

"*The United States cannot steal every secret, penetrate every cell, act on every tip, or track down every terrorist -- nor should we have to do this alone. This is not just about our security. It is about the common security of all the world*." – Barack Obama, Washington, D.C. August 1, 2007

In the 21st century, there is no virtue in going it alone, when you could have friends by your side. Equally, there is no wisdom in employing only military power when so many threats in the 21st century are not just military in nature, and when so many other tools of national power could be more effective. And yet, under the Bush administration, we have had a singularly militarized, unilateral approach, undercutting our long-term security. An Obama administration will regain the participation of our friends and allies in the effort to meet mutual security goals and it will harness all of the elements of national power to address the challenges we face in the 21st century.

Increase the Participation of Our Allies in Meeting Our Common Security Challenges: America's traditional alliances, such as NATO, must be transformed and strengthened to focus on partnering in homeland security and counter-terrorism. The "Global Maritime Partnerships" concept, developed by the Chief of Naval Operations, seeks to leverage the naval forces of friends and allies to expand the effectiveness of the U.S. Navy. This is a sound initiative and it should be expanded, where possible, into the planning of all our military forces

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to shape the global security environment. Obama will build alliances and ensure our allies contribute their fair share to our common security.

Organize to Help Our Partners and Allies When They Are in Need: Our military engages in a wide range of humanitarian activities that build friends and allies at the regional and ground level, most remarkably during the response to the tsunami in South and Southeast Asia. This demonstration of American military professionalism and aid won back local hearts in key Muslim states. Yet, such strategic and high pay off programs are presently not included in long-term planning and, when they do occur, actually take away funds from a unit's regular operational budget. The result is that the United States sometimes misses opportunities to build partnerships and trust. The Obama administration will expand such programs, regularizing them into the annual budget so that our efforts to aid allies, and win hearts and minds along the way, are sustainable, rather than ad-hoc.

Enhance Military to Military Cooperation, Particularly in the Muslim World : An Obama administration will strengthen and expand our global network of military to military cooperation, in order to build a climate that can defuse tensions when they arise. Existing U.S. programs of military to military exchanges, joint training, education, and human rights programs must be reoriented from their current Cold War standards to reflect new strategic priorities and ethical standards**.** Relationships that reassure potential future competitors both of America's goodwill and its strength may help dissuade emerging powers from becoming threats. An Obama administration will also prioritize the strengthening training and working relationships with the next generation of military leaders in allied states in the Muslim and wider developing world, in order to build professionalism and respect for rights and democracy, as well as open and sustain unofficial channels of communication and influence.

8) Reform Contracting

"We cannot win a fight for hearts and minds when we outsource critical missions to unaccountable contractors. To add insult to injury, these contractors are charging taxpayers up to nine times more to do the same jobs as soldiers, a disparity that damages troop morale." Barack Obama, Iowa City, October 3, 2007.

From Blackwater in Iraq and even in post-Katrina New Orleans to contract interrogators involved in the Abu Ghraib prison abuses, we have turned over too much of the public missions of defense and foreign policy to private firms interested primarily in profit. There are more than 160,000 private contractors working in Iraq, paid salaries far more than our servicemen and women, and yet not held to the same legal standards. Even worse, a lack of planning, oversight and management of these contractors has repeatedly undermined our troops' efforts in the field.

Foresight on Military Contractors: Barack Obama is the original sponsor of the "Transparency and Accountability in Military and Security Contracting Act of 2007," the first effort by the Senate to solve these problems, through a combination of smart public policy and good business sense. Almost every candidate running for president has talked about this issue to the press. Barack Obama has actually taken action, and did so some eight months before the recent tragedy in Baghdad involving Blackwater shootings of civilians. It is yet another demonstration of his foresight and judgment on the issues that matter, rather than waiting for the polls to determine his position after the fact. It must also be noted that he is not represented by the same firms and lobbyists that have represented firms like Blackwater, nor does he accept campaign donations from them.

Create Transparency for Military Contractors: Obama's legislation will:

- Create the reporting requirements, accounting, and accountability needed for good governance and actual money savings with contracting.

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- Require the Pentagon to develop a strategy for figuring out when contracting makes sense and when it doesn't, rather than continually handing off governmental jobs to well-connected companies.

- Establish the legal status of contractor personnel, making possible prosecution of any abuses committed by private military contractors.

"Most contractors act as if the law doesn't apply to them. Under my plan, if contractors break the law, they will be prosecuted." Barack Obama, University of Iowa, Oct. 3, 2007

Restore Honesty, Openness, and Commonsense to Contracting and Procurement: 40 percent of Pentagon acquisitions come in over cost and an estimated 5 percent of the overall budget is lost through corruption. Barack Obama's bill is one step within a larger set of initiatives that are needed to wring out savings by reducing the corruption and cost overruns that have become all too routine in defense contracting. As president, Obama will:

- Launch a program of acquisition reform and management to gain massive savings in the Pentagon budget, including a special focus on ending the common practice of no-bid contracting. Good competition builds good business, so the days of giving billion dollar contracts to companies like Halliburton and KBR without competition will be over.

- End the abuse of the supplemental budgets, where much of the money has been lost, by creating system of oversight for war funds as stringent as in the regular budget.

- Restore the government's ability to manage contracts, by rebuilding our contract officer corps.

- Order the Justice Department to prioritize prosecutions that will punish and deter waste and theft that undermines security, and

- Enact a program of market incentives and sanctions for Pentagon contractors, just like any other good business client would use, to reward companies that perform well and come in under budget, while punishing firms that fail to perform as originally hired.

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Additional Resources:

For more information on Barack Obama's vision

- Strengthen America's security, please go to
  http://my.barackobama.com/page/-/pdf/Fact percent20Sheet percent20Foreign percent20Policy.pdf

- End the War in Iraq, please go to
  http://my.barackobama.com/page/-/pdf/Fact percent20Sheet percent20Iraq percent20Final.pdf

- A New Beginning to America on Foreign Policy, please go to
  http://www.barackobama.com/2007/10/02/remarks_of_senator_barack_obam_27.php

- Protect the American homeland, please go to
  http://www.barackobama.com/issues/homeland

- Ensure Veteran's rights, please go to
  http://www.barackobama.com/issues/veterans/

- Win the Battle Against Terrorism, please go to
  http://www.barackobama.com/pdf/CounterterrorismFactSheet.pdf

- Strengthening Our Common Security by Investing in Our Common Humanity, please go to
  http://my.barackobama.com/page/-/HQpress/11.25.07Dem%20Dev%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf

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