



## BARACK OBAMA: FIGHTING TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

*"When I am president, we will wage the war that has to be won... The first step must be getting off the wrong battlefield in Iraq, and taking the fight to the terrorists in Afghanistan and Pakistan."*

[Speech at the Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., 8/1/07]

## OBAMA'S PLAN TO FIGHT TERRORISM IN AFGHANISTAN & PAKISTAN

Barack Obama understands what President Bush and so many Washington politicians do not: Afghanistan and Pakistan are the central fronts in the war against al Qaeda. That is why he opposed the Iraq war from the start, called for a phased withdrawal from Iraq in January 2007, and has pushed for sending more troops to Afghanistan. Combating extremism in the region requires more than military means, however. Obama will put diplomatic pressure on Pakistan to fulfill its commitment to root out Taliban and al Qaeda sanctuaries on its soil. He has also offered specific proposals that will address the sources of extremism: promoting economic development in Afghanistan and Pakistan, funding secular education in both countries, and supporting a return to democracy in Pakistan. Obama's comprehensive strategy addresses the real threats to our security and will make America safer.

**Focus on the True Threat:** Today, America's most dangerous enemies are training and plotting in the tribal regions of northwestern Pakistan. This al Qaeda safe-haven is a direct result of a failed policy of war in Iraq. Instead of finishing the job against Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda in Afghanistan, we diverted our attention and resources to a war that should never have been authorized and waged. This allowed the terrorists to escape into Pakistan, where they have steadily rebuilt their strength and where they threaten America as well as Afghanistan and Pakistan. Barack Obama saw this danger early on, noting recently, "I can only repeat what I said nearly five years ago, during the run-up to this war. We are fighting on the wrong battlefield. The terrorists who attacked us and who continue to plot against us are resurgent in the hills between Afghanistan and Pakistan. They should have been our focus then. They must be our focus now."

**Draw Down in Iraq, Ramp Up in Afghanistan:** To end the war in Iraq, Barack Obama introduced legislation in January 2007 to begin a phased withdrawal of combat troops out of Iraq. A drawdown in Iraq will not only free American troops from policing a civil war, it will also free up desperately needed military resources for the fight against al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was from the soil of Afghanistan that al Qaeda planned and trained for the mass murder of September 11. We fight there alongside 36 other nations committed to the cause. The people of Afghanistan also still want us there. Obama will deploy at least an additional two brigades (7,000 personnel) of rested, trained American troops to Afghanistan to reinforce our counter-terrorism operations and support NATO's efforts to fight the Taliban. He will also put more of an Afghan face on security by improving the training and equipping of the Afghan Army and Police, and including Afghan soldiers in U.S. and NATO operations.

**Promote Political and Economic Solutions:** The solution in Afghanistan is not just military – it is political and economic. Obama would increase our non-military aid to Afghanistan by \$1 billion. These resources would fund projects at the local level to help ordinary Afghans, including the development of alternative livelihoods for poppy farmers. He will demand better performance from the Afghan government, and support that performance through tough anti-corruption safeguards on aid and increased international assistance to develop the rule of law across the country. Furthermore, Obama has proposed a \$2 billion Global Education Fund, including to finance schools that will counter the message of radical Islamist *madrasas*.

**Demand More From Pakistan:** Success in Afghanistan requires action in Pakistan. While Pakistan has made some contributions by bringing some al Qaeda operatives to justice, the Pakistani government has not done nearly enough to limit extremist activity in the country and to help stabilize Afghanistan. As president, Barack Obama would condition U.S. military aid to Pakistan on their making progress to close down the training camps, evict foreign fighters, and prevent the Taliban from using Pakistan as a base to strike inside of Afghanistan. At the same time, he supports dialogue between Pakistan and India to work toward resolving their dispute over Kashmir. If Pakistan can look toward its east with greater confidence, it will be less likely to pursue “strategic depth” in the west through cooperation with the Taliban. Obama has spelled out his position clearly: “I have supported aid to Pakistan in the Senate and ... I would continue substantial military aid if Pakistan takes action to root out the terrorists.” He has also been clear about the limits of American patience, adding, “If we have actionable intelligence about high-value terrorist targets and President Musharraf won’t act, we will. I firmly believe that if we know the whereabouts of bin Laden and his deputies and we have exhausted all other options, we must take them out.”

**Restore Democracy to Pakistan:** The broader goal of defeating extremism in Pakistan will be achieved by listening to the people of Pakistan. That is why Barack Obama unambiguously supports the restoration of democracy in Pakistan. America has an interest in a stable *and* democratic Pakistan. President Musharraf should follow the Pakistani constitution and step down as Army chief and free and fair elections must take place in early 2008 for parliament. Obama’s approach fundamentally differs with that of the Bush administration on Pakistan: President Bush backs the dictator; Obama supports a return to democracy and the Pakistani constitution. In addition, Obama supports funding secular education in Pakistan and directing development aid to the troubled regions bordering Afghanistan.