

Bill Richardson for President

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## A Grand Strategy on Terrorism

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Nearly six years ago, 19 Al Qaeda terrorists committed the largest mass murder in our country's history. Now, more than 2000 days later, those who organized 9-11 hide along the Pakistan/Afghanistan border. Our intelligence agencies tell us that Al Qaeda today is more diffuse and dangerous than ever.

Al Qaeda is not the only terrorist group. But it is unique -- it has declared war on America, it has attacked us on our soil -- and it continues to plan another spectacular domestic attack like 9-11 or worse.

The leaders of Al Qaeda say they wish to kill 4 million Americans, including 2 million children. In their madness, they claim that such a slaughter of innocents would "balance the scales of justice," for crimes that they allege we have committed against Muslims. We would be mad not to take them at their word.

So I want to focus my comments today on what we need to do to defeat Al Qaeda. That is not to ignore other groups. Indeed much of what we do to destroy Al Qaeda will help defeat other terrorists. Rather, it is to recognize what this Administration seems never to have understood: the unique danger posed to our country by Al Qaeda and its sympathizers.

Al Qaeda first attacked America in 1998 in East Africa. Months before that attack, President Clinton sent me to Afghanistan to press the Taliban to hand over Osama bin Laden. They refused. So we imposed tough UN sanctions on them.

When the Bush Administration came into office they seemed not to understand how serious the threat we faced was. They ignored dire warnings from the CIA and other terrorist experts. The August 6, 2001 Presidential daily briefing read "Bin Laden Determined to Strike in US." The President failed to understand what this meant.

After September 11th, he seemed finally to get it. I supported the liberation of Afghanistan. I had seen with my own eyes the Taliban's repression of women; their paranoid intolerance of all dissent and all diversity. I knew they were unlikely to respond to reason.

If only the President had kept his eye on the ball and finished the job when he had the chance. Al Qaeda was on the ropes in 2002, cornered in the badlands between Afghanistan and Pakistan. If our troops had been given the resources they needed, we could have finished them off.

But the President chose instead to divert our resources from that necessary war to a war of choice. We know that there was no Al Qaeda in Iraq before 2001 and no Iraqi connection to 9-11. Extensive study by the 9-11 commission and others has confirmed that. Even the President admits it. And we know now that Iraq had no WMD.

Iraq diverted critical intelligence and military resources from the fight against Al Qaeda. We let up the pressure and Al Qaeda recovered -- and struck back. Since 2002, Al Qaeda and its affiliates have carried out attacks in Algiers, Casablanca, Madrid, London, Istanbul, Riyadh, Tel Aviv, Jeddah, Karachi, Sharm al Shaykh, Taba, Mombassa, Kuwait, Mumbai, New Delhi, Dacca, Bali and elsewhere.

In Iraq, the President rejected the sage advice of those who argued that we needed a careful plan for what to do after we reached Baghdad.

Mr. Bush did not have a plan. But Al Qaeda did. After the US invasion, it sent fighters to Iraq with the goal of provoking a civil war. It carried out hundreds of attacks on Shia shrines, leaders and innocents to provoke the sectarian bloodbath we face today.

It was an evil plan -- but a predictable one. But, lost in his delusions of an easy peace, President Bush did not

figure out what was happening until it was too late. Iraq was now in a civil war, and there was nothing we could do to stop it.

So the result today is an Al Qaeda which is more diffuse and more deadly than ever. It has a stronghold in South Asia and a booming franchise in Iraq. It is raising so much money in Iraq that it cannot spend it all there -- and it uses it to fund other operations around the world.

And sooner or later Al Qaeda will attack America at home again. We have already foiled plots to do so. We know that they take their time, and slowly and methodically plan and then execute spectacular attacks. We know they have tried to acquire nuclear weapons. Our FBI Director says he stays up at night worrying about an Al Qaeda nuclear attack on America.

**We need to address this threat with the focus it deserves. We need a grand strategy for defeating Al Qaeda.**

The past five years have demonstrated that a primarily military strategy will not work. Indeed, the botched occupation of Iraq has played into the hands of the Jihadists -- bolstering their propaganda that the US wants to kill Muslims, and that we want to control the Muslim world to exploit its resources.

Never has America been as unpopular as it is today. In Iraq, and in many other Muslim countries, polls show that our credibility has plummeted. As a direct result of the Iraq occupation, large majorities of Muslims now say they distrust America. Such sentiment facilitates Jihadist recruitment and boosts their popular support.

A new grand strategy against the Qaeda movement must repair this damage that the Bush policies have done to our international reputation. In particular, we need to reach out to Muslims, and demonstrate -- by our actions as well as our words -- that we respect Muslim culture and value Muslim life.

We need to earn back our allies' confidence in American leadership, and diplomatically resolve the conflicts that fuel Al Qaeda's recruitment in the Muslim world. We must overcome those who call for the destruction of Israel, and achieve a just, two-state solution which guarantees Israel's security.

Intelligence efforts need to focus on the Al Qaeda leadership, and on breaking up cells before they act. This will require more human intelligence and more Arab-speaking experts, as well as better intelligence coordination with our allies and Arab friends.

The target of our military strategy needs to be the Al Qaeda leadership. As long as these men are active, they symbolize the success of resistance to America, and attract new recruits. It is not good enough to have them "hiding in caves." The death or capture of Osama bin Ladin and his associates in Pakistan and Afghanistan will not end the Al Qaeda movement, but it will deal it a serious setback. So how do we do it?

A critical first step is to enhance our commitment -- military, political and economic -- to Afghanistan. To defeat the resurgent Taliban will require a significant increase in NATO forces along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border-- and that will require American leadership.

We urgently must redirect our military effort away from Iraq (where Al Qaeda's leadership is not located) and toward the Afghanistan-Pakistan border (where they ARE located).

When our allies see that we have finally gotten our priorities straight -- that we have revived our commitment to going after the Al Qaeda leadership where it is -- only then will they provide enough troops and equipment to overwhelm the enemy.

It is also critical that we engage Muslim countries in this effort: to the extent that the troops rooting out Al Qaeda and the Taliban are Muslims, the Jihadists cannot portray the effort to defeat them as one of "the West against Islam." The US therefore should encourage our Muslim and Arab partners, especially Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, to offer troops to help stabilize Afghanistan.

NATO should create a contact group, led by a senior NATO diplomat, to engage all of Afghanistan's neighbors on border stabilization, especially along the 1500 mile long Pakistan border. This group should include Iran and India.

We need a much bigger economic reconstruction program for Afghanistan. Humanitarian and economic aid fosters goodwill and bolsters support for our efforts. Nothing is more effective against our enemies than the memory of American aid workers who saved a child or rebuilt a village after an earthquake or a Tsunami.

Saving Afghanistan will require a multilateral Marshall Plan -- an effort on the scale of what rebuilt Europe after the Second World War. The US should lead a coalition to rebuild this country that has been ravaged by three decades of war. Russia, Japan, Europe, India and others should contribute.

Such a Marshall Plan must include a program to provide all Afghan children with education and free lunches. Too many children fall into the hands of Islamic schools, some of which teach violence, because it is their only

educational option. The long-term defeat of Al Qaeda depends on teaching hope, rather than hate, to the next generation.

These efforts also must extend into Pakistan. The border regions are poverty-stricken breeding grounds for Jihadism. We need to read the riot act to Dick Cheney's pal, President Musharraf. We have provided him with \$10 billion, in mostly military aid. Future aid must be linked to a real crackdown on terrorists -- including Arabs, Afghans and Kashmiris.

Musharraf also doesn't seem to care much for democracy. We need to insist that Pakistan have free elections this year.

Some have argued that democracy could bring radical Islamists to power. That is nonsense. Polls show that most Pakistanis favor the mainstream parties. However, the narrow political base of the Musharraf government is a key reason why the Taliban and Al Qaeda are growing in influence. Pakistan needs a representative government and a free and vibrant civil society, if it is to resist the Siren's call of the Jihadists.

Iraq is also a critical battlefield in the fight against Jihadism -- because it prevents us from fully engaging the core Al Qaeda leadership in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Our enemies want us to remain bogged down in Iraq.

Let me say that again -- Al Qaeda benefits from our being trapped in Iraq, and wants us to stay there. They know that if we were not stuck in Iraq, we could go after them where they are. They know that the Shia and the Kurds in Iraq don't want them there, and that many Sunni Iraqis tolerate them only because they are allies against us. When we leave, they know the Iraqis will drive them out of Iraq.

We cannot defeat Al Qaeda until we get out of Iraq. An orderly, phased and complete troop withdrawal could be completed rapidly -- and it is imperative that it be complete. The key to an exit strategy is to exit. We don't need a South Korea-like solution as the President suggests, an open-ended military base in Iraq that will alienate succeeding generations of Iraqis and other Muslims.

This Monday Sandy Berger and Bruce Riedel wrote an op-ed in the Financial Times that endorses this position. They wrote, "A clear U.S. commitment to a complete, irreversible withdrawal from Iraq may now be the only way to develop a regional concert of powers that could work with Iraqis to try to stabilize the country and cauterize the conflict."

More and more are agreeing with me. We must remove ALL of our troops. I hope Congress will de-authorize this war and force President Bush to start bringing them out this year. The sooner we are out of Iraq, the sooner we can begin to win the real war against the real terrorists who attacked this country on 9-11.

We cannot win the war against Al Qaeda alone. It is urgent that we rebuild our alliances, so that we can once again lead other nations. Trust is critical to getting allies to work with us in the secret world of counter terrorism and in the open world of public diplomacy. This administration has driven away our allies with swagger and saber rattling. I will rebuild our alliances by making common cause with partners who share our values and interests.

We also need to win the war of ideas with Al Qaeda. Simply calling for democracy is not enough, because actions speak louder than words. And the actions of the Bush administration have not matched its rhetoric. Military tactics which have resulted in the deaths of thousands of civilians have fed the perception -- fanned by the Jihadists' propaganda -- that we don't care about Muslim life.

Human rights abuses at Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and elsewhere have sullied our reputation. When people see these images, they associate America not with human rights and freedom, but rather with secret prisons and torture. America is better than the Bush-Cheney administration. If we want to win the war of ideas, we need to return to our proud tradition as a country that respects human rights.

I have spoken before of the ideological war that is going on in the Islamic world today between fanatics like bin Laden and moderates like Jordan's King Abdullah and Morocco's King Muhammad, who have a progressive view of Islam. We need to stand by these leaders in their effort to defeat extremism.

As President I will personally engage in a new Middle East peace process, and I will make achieving a two-state solution my highest diplomatic priority. President Clinton came very close to a deal in 2000, and the Bush administration's disengagement for six years allowed the situation to drift and degenerate.

To reverse this damage, as President I would appoint a full-time high-level envoy dedicated to improving our relationships with the Muslim world. This person would be fluent in the cultures, language and customs of the Arab Street, and serve as an attaché helping to bridge the divide the Bush Administration's failed policies have helped to create.

The President should also use our enhanced relationship with India in the wake of the nuclear deal signed last year to encourage the nascent Indo-Pakistani dialogue. Kashmir is key to breaking the Pakistani connection to terror. I

have been to Islamabad and I have listened to Pakistani leaders plead with America to do something about Kashmir. It is a cause which fuels resentment of the West in their country, and pushes people to support terrorists. The time for preventive diplomacy on the subcontinent is now, while Pakistan and India are talking to each other.

## HOMELAND SECURITY

We also must address homeland security much more strategically than we have. A biological or nuclear attack could be as horrific as Hiroshima -- and terrorism experts agree that sooner or later such an attack is likely. We must do everything we can to prevent this -- and we must improve our ability to respond quickly if an attack occurs, to assist the victims, and to recover.

A strong civil defense system is essential not just to save lives after an attack, but also to help prevent attacks. That is because, to the extent that we can survive and rebuild, rather than panic, the attack loses some of its military value to the terrorists. This is what experts call "resilience." Accordingly, we must remember that civil defense measures are not just playing defense. They are essential components of a grand strategy to defeat Al Qaeda.

State and local governments have roles to play in homeland security. In New Mexico we have taken many steps to make our citizens more secure.

We passed a statewide mutual aid law so that communities can assist one another without bureaucratic red tape, and we made Emergency Management and Homeland Security an independent, cabinet-level department.

We also established a robust border security program, and established a funding stream to help border communities police more effectively.

We passed a law providing job protection to volunteer emergency responders, and we increased supplemental life insurance for our National Guard.

But protecting American citizens from terrorist attack is fundamentally the responsibility of the federal government. Only the federal government can protect our borders and our ports, fund cutting-edge technologies, and undertake many other functions that need to be done at the national and international levels. While the Bush administration has taken some measures to improve security, particularly of air travel, there are many things which -- nearly six years after 9-11 -- have not been done to protect the American people.

By far, the most urgent thing we must do -- and are not doing -- is to vastly improve the surge capacity of our public health systems, so that we can respond quickly and effectively to a nuclear or biological attack. This administration has neglected to fund the modernization of our ability to take care of Americans and to recover from an attack at home. We must reverse this.

We should build mobile hospitals that can be brought quickly wherever they are needed, and we should stockpile equipment, medicines and vaccines, and equip standby hospitals. The Federal government needs to provide funding so that every community has an effective disaster management system, as well as reliable communications systems among all first responders and medical facilities.

And we urgently must train more doctors, paramedics and, especially, nurses for disaster and terrorism response. Such personnel, of course, can also help improve health care delivery every day to underserved populations.

The Federal Government can make this happen with a medical GI bill -- a scholarship program for nurses and other medical specialists. A medical GI bill would provide full scholarships in exchange for a commitment to serve in poor and rural areas, and to participate in national disaster response.

We need to be able to produce large amounts of vaccine for new diseases -- quickly. Flu vaccines are still manufactured the same way they have been for decades, using eggs, and must be made for specific strains of disease. The Federal government can help with more funding for cell-based vaccine manufacture and recombinant DNA vaccines.

We also need risk-based funding for homeland security: it is unpatriotic for legislators to turn homeland security dollars into pork. We need to spend homeland security funds where they are needed -- in high-risk urban areas like New York, Chicago, and LA.

We know Al Qaeda has sought nuclear weapons, and that if they obtain them they will use them with the same ruthlessness with which they flew airplanes filled with people into buildings filled with people. I have spoken at length elsewhere about how to prevent this "ultimate preventable catastrophe." Preventing a terrorist nuclear attack requires urgent action on many fronts:

First and foremost, we must keep nuclear materials out of the hands of terrorists, both through counter-proliferation, and by securing all fissionable material worldwide. This is a huge task, but not an impossible

one. The United States must lead a comprehensive global effort to secure all nuclear weapons and all nuclear fuel and spent fuel. This is the only way to keep nukes out of the wrong hands.

Good things already have been done, such as the Nunn-Lugar program and DOE's Material Protection, Control and Accounting program. But we must do more to secure nuclear arsenals, above all those of Russia and Pakistan. Now that we are finally talking to the North Koreans, we need to make sure that they desist from trafficking and that they really dismantle their nukes. And we must not relent in leading international efforts to stop Iran's nuclear enrichment program -- with diplomacy combining tough sanctions and positive incentives.

And we need a global fuel-banking arrangement that insures that nuclear fuel is enriched and spent-fuel is disposed of in a limited number of highly-secure sites.

Such a comprehensive and global diplomatic effort to secure the nuclear materials Al Qaeda wants must be a top priority of the next President. As a former Energy Secretary, I understand the urgency of this. As a diplomat and former US Ambassador to the UN, I believe we can do it.

We also need to prevent nuclear weapons from getting past our borders -- not with walls, but with vastly improved detection efforts on the Canadian and Mexican borders, at our sea and land ports, and on the high seas. This will take major investments in technology, intelligence gathering and personnel, including National Guard and border security. But it is needed to interdict nuclear weapons or materials terrorists will try to smuggle into the country.

America can and will defeat Al Qaeda. Because at the end of the day the vast majority of Muslims do not share their twisted vision of jihad.

And with the right American leadership, the world will follow us as we put these people out of business. We need leadership that understands the nature of the enemy, and focuses on the real terrorists who attacked us on 9-11. Leadership that recognizes that we must lead by example, that our deeds must match our words, and that we are strongest -- and safest -- when we use ALL of our resource -- military, economic, diplomatic, humanitarian and political.

With this kind of leadership, and with a comprehensive global strategy, we can and will defeat Al Qaeda. Thank you.

