

**Keynote Address (as delivered) by Frances Fragos Townsend
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Thank you for your kind introduction. It is a pleasure to be here and, looking at your program, I'm sad that I can't stay for the rest of the day! I am delighted to be here – many of you have spent your entire life studying terrorism and terrorist organizations, and it is a pleasure to be with you to discuss these issues.

Distinguished guests, I am delighted to speak with you today, and I thank both the US Institute of Peace and the Social Science Research Council for organizing this important event.

This conference has as one of its themes, it seems to me, to take stock of what we know – and what we don't know – about how terrorist organizations adapt and change. Such insight is crucial to winning the War on Terrorism. If we cannot properly define our enemy and understand what our enemies require to operate and survive – including how they evolve – we will not be able to execute an effective counterterrorism strategy.

What I would like to do today is discuss the terrorist enemy confronting the United States and the President's strategy to defeat it.

In the aftermath of the attacks on the Homeland four years ago, the United States, in concert with our coalition partners, has waged an unremitting war against al-Qaida, its

associates and supporters, and the deadly scourge of terror and intimidation more broadly.

We have been on the offensive, taking the fight to the enemy in a campaign of direct and continuous action that has degraded the ranks of al-Qaida's leaders and operatives; constricted the space in which terrorists can operate and transit freely; and choked the lifeblood of terrorists by cutting off key funding channels and sources. These offensive activities, combined with extensive defensive measures, continue to bolster the security of the United States and its citizens and interests abroad.

As the United States, together with its allies and partners throughout the world, continues its efforts to disrupt, degrade, and ultimately defeat al-Qaida and its supporters, we confront a broader enemy: a transnational movement of extremist organizations, networks, and individuals -- and their state and non-state supporters -- which have in common that they exploit Islam and use terrorism for ideological ends.

This enemy has both a vision for what it wants to achieve and its own strategy to achieve it. The enemy's prime goal is the establishment of regimes that govern according to a radical and extremist interpretation of Islam. For some among the enemy, particularly al-Qaida, the objective is even bolder -- a pan-Islamic Caliphate that imposes their distorted and violent interpretation of Islamic law over a large part of the world and millions of people.

The enemy fervently believes in the use of violence – and particularly terrorism – as a means to achieve its vision. The terrorists’ campaign of horrific attacks — on display from Bali to Beslan to London — is meant to force a US and Western retreat from the Muslim world and to overthrow governments across the Arab and Muslim world – governments the enemy deems are “apostate ” . These attacks also are meant to serve as a “call to arms” across the Muslim world—attracting additional followers to their cause and additional monies to their efforts. For the enemy, this is a zero-sum game: there is no middle-ground, no room for alternative visions or points of view. For the enemy, there is no peaceful co-existence with those who do not subscribe to or rule according to their distorted interpretation of Islamic law.

The regimes envisioned and pursued by the enemy would not only deny religious and political freedoms. In sharing common cause with terrorists, they would also serve as a terrorist sanctuary – a base from which terrorists could prepare for further attacks and acts of violence against the U.S., our friends and partners, and the Muslim world itself.

But the terrorists’ vision of a world darkened by hate and oppression fails against our strategy of freedom, hope and democracy. As the President has said, “We’re fighting the terrorists and we’re fighting their murderous ideology, by spreading the hope of freedom across the broader Middle East.”

And we have been pursuing this strategy relentlessly since the tragic attacks of 9/11.

The War on Terrorism has two key aims: defeat violent extremism as a threat to our way of life as a free and open society; and create a global environment inhospitable to violent extremists and all who support them.

To achieve our aims and win the War on Terrorism, we are acting and achieving success through unity of effort on three fronts:

First, we are attacking terrorists and their capacity to operate effectively at home and abroad. We are on the offensive, taking the fight to our terrorist enemy wherever he may hide. Along with our partners around the world, we are defeating the enemy overseas so that we do not face them on our shores. Our successes, and those of our friends and allies, continue to accumulate:

- The majority of key al-Qaida leaders, operational managers, and facilitators have been killed or taken into custody. Because of these efforts, the al-Qaida of 9/11 is no longer the al-Qaida we face today.**
 - Khalid Shaykh Muhammad, the principal architect of the barbaric attacks on September 11th is in custody.**
 - Muhammad Atef, Bin Laden's second in command until his death in late 2001**
 - September 11th co-conspirator Ramzi bin al Shibh**
 - And, just this May, Pakistan apprehended Abu Faraj al-Libbi, at the time the number three leader in al-Qaida.**

While the loss of terrorist leaders and senior managers may force some groups to collapse, other groups adapt -- by promoting new leaders or decentralizing command structures -- making our challenges even greater. This is why we also continue to attack other resources that terrorists need to operate and survive, including, for example:

- **Funding: We are significantly reducing the financial resources available to terrorists:**
 - **Over 400 individuals and entities have been designated under the President's EO 13224, effectively blocking their assets. This is a highly effective tool in disrupting and dismantling the financial networks that support terrorism.**
 - **The Secretary of State has designated 41 Foreign Terrorist Organizations, which makes it illegal to provide these 41 groups material support and serves to freeze their assets in U.S. financial institutions.**

- **We are working against their Communications, movement, and documentation:**
 - **With our partners – both bilaterally and through international and regional organizations –to limit terrorists' freedom of movement. UN Security Council Resolution 1373 calls for, among other things, denying safe haven and preventing the movement of terrorists across**

borders. Last year, the G-8 adopted the Secure and Facilitated International Travel Initiative (SAFTI), which focused its 28 action items on developing best practices and mechanisms to increase the impediments to terrorists' ability to travel.

- o **Moreover, recognizing that the 9/11 terrorists entered our country legally, we are working to eliminate vulnerabilities at ports of entry by employing a layered approach to border security – pre-arrival screening of all visa applicants; vetting of all passengers traveling to the US by air or sea; enhancing security at our land borders and screening entrants at ports of entry. Since September 11, 2001, annual funding for border security has increased more than 50 percent.**

We work against terrorist acquisition of Weapons: Among other initiatives, the US Government is working to combat the acquisition of Man-Portable Air-Defense Systems, or MANPADS, by terrorists and their supporters. Since 2003, we have facilitated the destruction of over 13,000 MANPADS in 13 countries and have received commitments for the destruction of over 6,000 more.

And we continue to deny our enemies the sanctuaries that enable them to exist, gain strength, and plan and prepare for terrorist operations.

We are attacking the terrorists and denying them what they need to operate and survive effectively.

But we play offense here at home, too, taking the fight to the enemy that exploits our open society, hides among us, and tries to attack us from within.

We continue to disrupt terror cells and prosecute terrorist activities inside our own country. We have frozen and blocked millions of terrorist-related dollars that either were in the US or attempting to enter our financial system.

A second element of our strategy is to protect and defend the Homeland.

The CT activities I just discussed – attacking our enemy’s leaders, operators, and facilitators; eradicating their sources of funding; disrupting their material support; and contracting the space in which they can operate and transit freely – are vital to ensuring the safety and security of the Homeland and the American people. They are offensive actions executed for defensive purposes.

And to better protect and defend the Homeland, we also are enhancing measures to bolster our borders, protect the airways, and secure the seas. We are increasing our defensive and preparedness measures within our borders as well – protecting critical infrastructure and preparing for and responding to emergencies that do occur. Just last week the President committed to the American people to take the lessons learned from the Federal response to

Hurricane Katrina to improve our preparedness to any and all catastrophic incidents regardless of their cause. In the meantime, we have broken terror cells in Portland, Oregon, and Northern Virginia, New York, and elsewhere. By taking steps to disrupt potential terrorist activities in the Homeland, we have made it more difficult for the enemy to complete their missions.

A third element of our strategy is to support mainstream Muslim efforts to reject violent extremism. There are various facets to this element of our approach, including helping to counter a radical ideology and encouraging political and economic opportunity and freedom in Muslim societies.

There is a war being waged within Islam, an ideological struggle for the popular support and loyalty of the Muslim world, a struggle that must include a direct challenge to the extremist voices within Islam. While our enemies conduct and call for the slaughter of innocents, the overwhelming majority of the Muslim world, along with all civilized peoples everywhere, are increasingly outraged by what the terrorists have done in London, Sharm al-Shaykh, in Madrid, Bali, Beslan and elsewhere. Muslim clerics and legal scholars in the U.S. and around the world have issued statements condemning terrorism, and we must continue to find ways to champion their efforts and further empower all moderate voices that stand for peace and tolerance throughout the Muslim world.

And this is why encouraging freedom and opportunity as well as education reform in Muslim societies – and the President’s larger freedom agenda – is critical to our

counterterrorism strategy. While we continue to take direct and continuous action to attack terrorists and defeat those who support them, triumph will occur when the ideologies that promote fear and hatred and despair – conditions that terrorists and violent extremists seek to exploit – are supplanted by the hopes and aspirations of liberty and freedom.

And liberty is on the march. The President, through his visionary leadership, is ushering in a wave of democracy and reform around the world and changing the dynamics in the broader Middle East, in particular, in ways that were perhaps unimaginable prior to September 11th.

- Afghanistan has promulgated a new constitution, elected a President with the overwhelming participation by the populace, and held successful National Assembly and Provincial Council elections over the weekend. Kabul has thrown off the yoke of a repressive Taliban regime and is building a democracy that acknowledges the central role of Islam in the lives of its citizens.**
- Liberty and freedom are finding their way in Iraq as well. The Iraqis have elected a transitional national assembly, named a transitional government, and drafted a new constitution. And as in Afghanistan, the Iraqi people have stood down bravely attempts by terrorists and insurgents to stifle the birth of a free and democratic Iraq. Terrorists have nothing to offer but death and destruction. And ordinary Iraqis are clearly determined to build a different, brighter future.**

- **And in Lebanon, the desire for liberty, combined with international pressure, forced the retreat of Syrian troops and the opening of a democratic process.**

Our terrorist enemies, in trying to fulfill their dystopian vision, condemn democratic ideals and institutions. Democracy instills justice, pluralism, and tolerance – the very ideals terrorists abhor and oppose.

To better enable the successful accomplishment of all three of our strategic fronts – attacking terrorists; protecting and defending the Homeland; and supporting mainstream Muslim efforts – we are also doing 3 other things:

- **expanding foreign partnerships and partnership capacity;**
- **strengthening our ability to prevent terrorist acquisition and use of WMD;**
- **and finally, creating transformational, enduring platforms to carry the War on Terrorism forward and ensure success.**

Terrorism is a global problem that requires a global solution, and the United States will continue to develop foreign partnerships and bolster the CT capabilities of our partners in areas such as law enforcement, intelligence and investigative techniques, and border security so they can fulfill their sovereign responsibilities to combat terrorism within their territory. Homeland security is a universal concept: As more partners defeat terrorists and defend their homelands, the security of our own Homeland increases.

We see the effects of our partnerships and CT capacity-building efforts in Pakistan, whose forces over the past year have captured more than 100 terrorists, including several involved in plotting attacks against the United States. And in the Saudi security services, we see they have detained more than 600 operatives, fundraisers, and radical clerics and killed more than 100 terrorists over the last few years.

Their successes like our own have come at a cost. Both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have lost men in uniform and in their security services who fought against the tyranny of terror.

I recently returned from Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia.

In Afghanistan, I traveled to Kabul and Bagram and visited a Provincial Reconstruction Team in Khost. What I saw was a fully transparent, integrated use of all elements of national power - law enforcement, intelligence, military, economic and diplomatic - all being used to support CT operations; standard military training; infrastructure development, and support for the political process – all being combined in a steady but determined march forward. It would not have been safe a year ago to travel to Khost. The fact that I was able to go on a Presidential mission demonstrates the progress being made there. The progress of the Provincial Reconstruction Teams in building a foundation for success is inspiring, as is the intensity and resolve of newly trained Afghan forces. These forces refer to their US counterparts as “their brothers” – and there is no higher praise. We will continue our efforts side by side with them -- pressing the fight against al-Qaida and other hostile elements who are trying to reclaim a liberated Afghanistan for tyranny.

While I was in Saudi Arabia earlier this month meeting with the King and other senior members of the royal family, Saudi forces were engaged in a CT siege against al-Qaida operatives and sharing with us real-time information on these important operations.

Again, the Saudis lost brave men in this fight. In addition to aggressive operations against terrorists, the Saudis have launched a public information campaign against terrorism and are standing up a financial intelligence unit to further strengthen their counterterrorism effort.

The terrorist threat we face today is amplified by the potential nexus with weapons of mass destruction. The Administration has expanded international efforts to deny terrorists access to advanced conventional weaponry and WMD, their delivery systems and related material and to disrupt the pathways terrorists might exploit to bring WMD into our populace. From the Proliferation Security Initiative.... the Global Threat Reduction Initiative.... important bilateral efforts... Executive Order 13382, which authorizes the Government to designate and block the property of WMD proliferators and persons providing support or services to them.... and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, which the President signed just last week along with other Heads of State at the U.N. --- we will not permit terrorists to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons.

The final component of our strategy is to create enduring platforms both at home and abroad to carry the fight forward and ensure our ultimate success.

One aspect of this is enhancing government architecture and interagency collaboration in the fight against terror, which the President has accomplished, in part, through the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, reforming the intelligence community, the post of Director of National Intelligence, the codification of both the National Counterterrorism Center and the National Counterproliferation Center, and his initiative to transform the FBI.

We also will establish and maintain international standards of accountability and foster intellectual and human capital on counterterrorism-related issues. This latter issue is especially important, and the President emphasized the point just a little over a week ago during the swearing-in ceremony for UnderSecretary of State Karen Hughes. Specific area studies and linguistics programs, similar to those developed to study the Soviet Union during the Cold War, will enhance our knowledge base and further strengthen our CT foundation and abilities over the long term.

We are in the midst of a war – a lengthy campaign against those who ultimately seek to destroy our freedoms and way of life. Our enemies have a dark vision and a strategy of violence --- our strategy is a positive vision of freedom and hope. And while challenging times still lay ahead, our strategy – which employs all elements of national power and influence – is designed to address these challenges. You have heard it said and it is still true; America is safer, but we are not yet safe. The President said it best in the days leading up to September 11th this year, “We will succeed. And the legacy of peace and

freedom we leave behind will be the greatest memorial to your fallen family members and friends. The heroes of September the 11th will not be here to see that day. But their moms and dads and children and grandchildren can know a proud America will always stand in the long shadow of their service and sacrifice, and a proud nation will always remember them.”

Thank you. May God Bless You.