

The Second Bush Administration's Global Security Policy

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In his second inaugural address on January 20, President Bush refocused the vision for his administration on freedom. This was not a new theme for a President whose major foreign and security policy decisions of the past four years could all be related to freedom from terrorism, freedom from tyranny, and freedom from poverty and disease. But the visionary speech was meant to reset the cornerstone of American purpose and his administration's commitment to leave a legacy of major, positive change in the world. It was a vision that eluded his father's tenure as President; for all his strengths, the former President Bush failed to recalibrate a vision for the immediate post-Cold War world. At the same time, President George Bush's second inaugural address was neither a strategy that related specific ends to means or a policy spelling out priorities. Those will be forthcoming in future weeks and months, and partly will hinge on global events and the individual decision-makers who shape critical decisions and their implementation. What we do know is that there are several critical sets of issues that the President cannot and will not ignore as he and his administration set out to promote global security by expanding freedom.

First, the second Bush administration's global policy will concentrate on combating terrorism around the globe. Geographically, this will require a continued priority focus on the Greater Middle East. Because post-Saddam Iraq has become the magnet for terrorism and insurgency, the administration will be compelled to determine a strategy for success, if not an exit strategy in Iraq. It will, too, have to see further progress in post-Taliban Afghanistan, as the international community can ill afford to see that first post-9/11 mission lapse back into a failed state. More broadly, however, combating terrorism will include a more effective effort at taking up thorny policy challenges, namely through an active role in promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians. It will also require broadening its outreach to support Arab and Muslim peoples in their quest for development, retaining necessarily strategic relations with even semi-authoritarian leaders while simultaneously using tough-love diplomacy with even friendly regimes such as those in Cairo, Riyadh, and Islamabad. It will require building a wider coalition among developed nations. And it will, finally, require forging a new long-term strategy for energy and new capacities for conflict mitigation and stabilization and reconstruction in order to better meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Second, the Bush administration will focus on containing and reducing the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear weapons, as well as other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. Freedom is especially threatened by the specter of a nuclear

weapon being detonated in one of our major cities; such a nightmare scenario brings great urgency to this effort, which has several facets. The first facet of the administration's counter-proliferation policies will be to do everything that it is possible to convince and compel governments in Teheran and Pyongyang that nuclear weapons programs are detrimental and not beneficial to their security and development. This will require continued and even growing international cooperation. A second aspect of this policy will be to ensure stability among other nuclear states and programs, such as those in South Asia. Another facet is the redoubling of earlier efforts to clean up and account for the nuclear residue left from the Cold War. A third facet is adding to these efforts longer-term capacities for biological threat reduction—a far more difficult challenge because of the nature of the production of such systems.

Third, freedom in this century will require improving relations among the major powers. We can expect the Bush administration to begin by healing some of the frayed relations across the Atlantic, reaffirming, even while redefining somewhat, transatlantic relations, both with individual countries and the growing European Community. We can also expect for the Bush administration to hew to a realistic policy with Russia; it will seek strategic cooperation overall, but it will reserve the right both to disagree on specific policies and place a spotlight on Russian policies that reduce the scope of political and economic freedom in and near Russia. Here the administration can be expected to support opportunities for advancing freedom, as most recently seen by the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. In Asia, the Bush administration will continue to have its bilateral relationship with Japan as a cornerstone of its security; and expanding relations with China will continue to grow. However, the administration cannot ignore the longer-term trend and concern about relations between a rising China and a more “normal” Japan. We can expect this trilateral relationship to take on added importance in even the next four years. But we can also expect the administration to retain strong or even bolster relations with other major democratic powers throughout the Asia-Pacific, especially India.

Fourth, because freedom in the 21st century is threatened more by failing and failed states than it is by a large and strong adversary, the United States will remain committed in the next four years to continued expansion of efforts to promote stability, economic prosperity, and political freedom throughout the developing world. Trade, foreign assistance, and a variety of instruments designed to bolster peace in the developing world are likely to receive special attention during the second Bush administration. Specific steps such as completing a Doha Round to further expand the benefits of globalization to developing economies; providing new debt relief; using new development assistance programs as effective catalysts to sustain poverty reduction through economic growth, expanding

knowledge-based societies, and promoting good governance; and expanding efforts to counter HIV/AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases that could expand rapidly around the globe such as SARS or avian flu—all of these, and others, can be expected. In addition, as mentioned above, there will also be an increasing emphasis on expanding the capacity within the U.S. government (both within the Defense and State Departments) and within international and regional bodies to prevent, triage or rebuild fragile states.

Finally, to help promote freedom against these challenges, the second Bush administration is likely to work assiduously with others to reinvigorate, reform and renew a variety of international and regional institutions. At the center of this effort, seizing this year in which we will celebrate the 60th anniversary of the United Nations, will be an attempt at retooling that international body to better meet the challenges of the 21st century. The recent report of the Secretary-General's "High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change," has put on the table a number of ways to improve the UN's ability to deal with six clusters of threats: economic and social threats; inter-state conflict; internal conflict; weapons of mass destruction; terrorism; and transnational crime. A new effort to reform the United Nations Security Council to better reflect the distribution of power in the world would be a serious first step toward increasing that body's ability to help preserve international peace. Another global institution, the World Trade Organization, can also be expected to be a central theme, around which a successful Doha Round could provide new impetus. Regional bodies may also be a matter of great attention, perhaps most pertinently in Northeast Asia, where we can expect growing interest in institutionalizing the Six Party Talks or perhaps some derivative of that process.

These are not only the only global challenges confronting the Bush administration's second term. But taken together, they are likely to remain the major building blocks around which President Bush and his administration seeks to promote security and freedom.