

Obama Administration Record on Securing Our Nation and Restoring American Leadership for the 21st Century

“The cause of securing our country is not complete. But tonight, we are once again reminded that America can do whatever we set our mind to. That is the story of our history, whether it’s the pursuit of prosperity for our people, or the struggle for equality for all our citizens; our commitment to stand up for our values abroad, and our sacrifices to make the world a safer place.”

- President Barack Obama, May 1, 2011

The President took office at a time of enormous challenges: two wars and a resurgent al Qaeda, strains in our alliances, a global financial crisis, and setbacks to America’s standing in the world. Under President Obama, we have ended the war in Iraq, delivered justice to Osama bin Laden and put al Qaeda on the path to defeat, and made substantial gains in Afghanistan while beginning a transition to Afghans that will enable our troops to come home. President Obama has also restored American leadership for the 21st century. Today, our citizens are safer, our nation is more secure, our armed forces are the strongest they’ve ever been, and American leadership is welcomed around the globe. The Obama Administration’s record on securing our nation and restoring American leadership include:

- **Restoring our Standing in the World:** After years in which our alliances frayed and global support for the United States fell to record lows, President Obama’s commitment to a new era of engagement, based on mutual interest and mutual respect, has helped to restore international support for U.S. leadership. From Europe to Asia to Africa to the Americas, surveys show dramatic increases in support for the United States. This makes nations and their people in these regions more likely to partner with us in pursuit of shared goals, ultimately making the American people safer and our nation more secure.
- **Ending the War in Iraq:** As promised, President Obama has responsibly ended the war in Iraq, bringing nearly 150,000 U.S. troops out of that country. President Obama steadily moved U.S. troops into a support role after taking office, and announced that the American combat mission in Iraq ended on August 31, 2010. And he followed through on his commitment to definitively end the war by removing all American forces from Iraq by the end of 2011. Meanwhile, Iraqi forces have taken full responsibility for security, and we will have a normal relationship with a sovereign Iraq that advances our shared security and interests.
- **Putting al Qaeda on the Path to Defeat:** As he has ended the war in Iraq, President Obama has refocused our resources on al Qaeda. Al Qaeda leadership ranks have been decimated, with more key leaders removed in rapid succession than at any time since 9/11, including Osama bin Laden, and nearly all of al Qaeda’s top ten leaders in Pakistan. Virtually every major al Qaeda affiliate has lost its key leader or operational commander; this includes Anwar al-Awlaki, the leader of external operations for al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula. For the first time since 9/11, we are approaching the operational and strategic defeat of al Qaeda.

- **Meeting our Goals in Afghanistan:** Thanks to the extraordinary service of our armed forces and civilians, we are meeting the objectives of President Obama's new strategy in Afghanistan: denying al Qaeda a safe-haven, reversing the Taliban's momentum, and strengthening the capacity of Afghanistan's security forces and government so that they can take the lead for Afghanistan's future. As a result of this progress, we have begun a transition to an Afghan security lead. As we pursue this transition, we will bring home 33,000 troops from Afghanistan by the end of the summer, and continue to bring more troops home as we transition to full Afghan responsibility for security by 2014.
- **Stopping a Massacre and Ending the Qadhafi Regime in Libya:** When Moammar Qadhafi launched a military campaign against his own people and threatened a massacre, President Obama refused to let it happen. The United States, working with NATO allies and Arab states, stopped Qadhafi's forces in their tracks, saving thousands of lives. We built an unprecedented coalition in which our NATO allies and Arab states enforced a No Fly Zone and protected the Libyan people. And in just eight months, we helped the Libyan people as they ended the Qadhafi regime and embraced democracy – all without putting a single U.S. service member on the ground.
- **Creating American Jobs and Restoring Global Growth:** Under President Obama, the United States has led the international response to the global economic crisis, putting the G-20 in the lead, helping to pull the global economy back from the brink, and agreeing on financial reforms to prevent another crisis in the future. Under the President's National Export Initiative, we are on track to double U.S. exports in five years, supporting millions of American jobs. Meanwhile, we have pursued trade that delivers for the American worker through reformed agreements with South Korea, Panama, and Colombia, and a Trans-Pacific Partnership that will open Asian markets to more American goods while meeting high standards to protect our workers and the environment.
- **Reducing the Danger of Nuclear Weapons:** Following his speech in Prague in 2009, President Obama has pursued a comprehensive agenda to secure nuclear materials from terrorists, stop the spread of nuclear weapons, and pursue a world without them. This includes:
 - **Nuclear security:** Since the President hosted an unprecedented Nuclear Security Summit in Washington, dozens of nations are working together to achieve the goal of securing all nuclear material around the world, including the elimination and removal of thousands of nuclear weapons worth of nuclear material, increased nuclear security across the globe, and new capacity to counter nuclear smuggling.
 - **New START:** The New START Treaty with Russia is the most comprehensive arms control agreement in two decades, and will reduce deployed nuclear arsenals to the lowest level in half a century.
 - **Non-Proliferation:** The United States has strengthened the global nonproliferation regime, and we have rallied other nations to enforce the strongest sanctions ever against Iran and North Korea for failing to meet their obligations.

- **Keeping Our Military Strong:** President Obama has invested in the tools, technologies and capabilities that our armed forces need to stay the best-trained, best-equipped, and best-led fighting force in the world. As we end the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and make necessary reductions in our defense budget, we will maintain America’s military superiority. With the end of the discriminatory “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell” law, our armed forces now draw on the strength of more members of our American family. For the first time ever, we are implementing a missile defense system that will protect all of our European allies and the United States. And we have directed unprecedented support to our military families, through the *Joining Forces* campaign championed by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden.
- **Leading in the Asia-Pacific:** Reaffirming America’s standing as a Pacific power, President Obama has bolstered America’s position in the world’s most economically dynamic region. We are strengthening our alliances with Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Australia; deepening our partnership with an emerging India; increasing our engagement with Asia’s multilateral organizations (including by hosting the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum in 2011 and by joining the East Asia Summit); and pursuing a cooperative relationship with China while standing up for our interests when we differ. Taken together, these efforts are advancing our security in a region that will continue to be critical to global security, supporting American jobs through increased exports, and promoting adherence to universal human rights.
- **Supporting Democratic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa:** As a new generation demands greater dignity and freedom across the Middle East and North Africa, President Obama has made it the policy of the United States to promote political and economic reform in the region, and to support transitions to democracy. We are working to support the transitions in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. In Syria and Yemen, President Obama has demanded an end to violence against peaceful protestors and called for transitions to democracy that answer the legitimate aspirations of citizens. In Bahrain, the President supported dialogue between the government and the opposition that leads to meaningful reform for all Bahrainis.
- **Supporting Peace between Israelis and Palestinians:** Since taking office, President Obama has actively worked to end the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and achieve the goal of two states for two peoples: Israel as a Jewish state and the homeland for the Jewish people and the state of Palestine as the homeland for the Palestinian people. Because Israelis deserve security, the United States has expanded our security cooperation with Israel to ensure it has the ability to defend itself—by itself—against any threat. And because Palestinians deserve a viable state of their own, the United States has worked to help Palestinians develop their society, create economic opportunities, and strengthen the institutions upon which statehood will depend.
- **Advancing Development:** President Obama has restored development to its rightful place as one of the key pillars of American foreign policy, recognizing that development is a strategic, economic, and moral imperative for the United States. The Administration’s landmark food security initiative, Feed the Future, is investing in small farmers, strengthened

agricultural markets, and the innovations that can expand production and foster sustained economic growth. And the Administration's Global Health initiative is working to help strengthen public health systems; save lives from infectious diseases including HIV/AIDS (where the President has led a global effort to move us closer to an AIDS-free generation), tuberculosis, malaria, and neglected tropical diseases; and invest in improving the health of women, newborns, and children.

- **Partnering with African Nations:** As he declared during his visit to Ghana in his first year in office, President Obama has committed the United States to a new era of partnership with African countries and civil society, particularly to advance economic growth and strengthen democratic institutions and governance. The Administration's development, health, and food security programs are collaborations in which Africans take the lead. In Cote d'Ivoire, President Obama helped lead the international effort to uphold the results of free elections. The United States worked with the international community to ensure a successful referendum in southern Sudan and the birth of the world's newest nation, the Republic of South Sudan.
- **Building Partnerships for Progress in the Americas:** President Obama has worked to forge equal partnerships to advance U.S. national interests and improve the daily lives of people throughout the Americas. He ordered significant changes to policies regarding Cuba and signed into law two free trade agreements with Colombia and Panama; they will create a level playing field for U.S. workers, businesses, farmers, and ranchers and generate new, immediate U.S. export opportunities, creating thousands of jobs in America. The President has also continued to partner with Mexico and Central America on regional and citizen security through the Central American Citizen Security Partnership.
- **Living our Values:** From his first days in office, the President has rejected the false choice between our values and security; he is determined to uphold both. He categorically banned torture, including the use of "enhanced interrogation techniques" which did not work. We have worked to build a durable legal framework that upholds our laws and values as we defeat al Qaeda.