

American

NEWS & VIEWS

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Successes Against Terrorism Are Slow, Uneven, President Bush Says

Bush says U.S. has transformed national security strategy against terrorism

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — The results of efforts by the United States to thwart global terrorism are unfolding slowly and unevenly, but there are encouraging signs, President Bush said December 9.

And in confronting terrorism, Bush said, the United States also transformed its national security strategy and its armed forces, which have played a sobering and critical role in the struggle.

“As part of our transformation effort, we are arming our troops with intelligence, and weapons, and training, and support they need to face an enemy that wages asymmetric battle,” Bush said in a December 9 speech in West Point, New York. “This enemy hides among the civilian population, and they use terror tactics like roadside bombs to attack our forces, to demoralize [the] local population, and to try to shake the will of the American people.”

And the United States has upgraded and enhanced its counterterrorism capabilities as well as developed a new and more effective counterinsurgency strategy that focuses on the importance of following up security gains with benefits in people's daily lives and livelihoods, the president said.

Bush was at West Point — the home of the U.S. Military Academy, where Army officers are educated — to review the changes his administration has brought to the armed forces and the ways in which the United States pursues its national security. It was at West Point on June 1, 2002, that the president presented detailed views of the crisis created by the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001. That address since has become known as the Bush Doctrine.

“We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans and confront the worst threats before they emerge. In the world we have entered, the only path to safety is the path of action. And this nation will act,” Bush told the graduating class at West Point six years ago.

After six years, the president said December 9, the threat is ever present, but much has changed in the way efforts are mounted to curb it.

“The terrorists continue to pose serious challenges, as the world saw in the terrible attack in Mumbai [India] last month,” Bush said. “Al-Qaida's top two leaders remain at large. Yet they are facing pressure so intense that the only way they can stay alive is to stay underground.”

And Bush pledged to the cadets, who soon will become regular Army officers, that the day will come when those terrorists will face justice.

“With all the actions we've taken these past eight years, we've laid a solid foundation on which future presidents and future military leaders can build,” Bush said. “In the years ahead, our nation must continue developing the capabilities to take the fight to our enemies across the world.”

DEFENSE TRANSFORMATION

Bush said that the United States and its allies have applied the full range of military and intelligence assets to keep “unrelenting pressure” on terrorist groups and their affiliates. “We have severely weakened the terrorists. We've disrupted plots to attack our homeland,” he said.

In strengthening U.S. counterterrorism capabilities, Bush said, the United States also has helped key partners and allies strengthen their capabilities by increasing intelligence-sharing and helping others assert control over ungoverned spaces, which terrorist groups seek as safe havens.

And the United States has made clear to governments that sponsor terror that they are as guilty as the terrorists, he said, and will be held to account. The president also said that the United States recognized early on that to thwart the current terrorist threats, it must also confront the terrorists' ideology.

Rather than replace governments with friendly strongmen, Bush said, the United States instead has sought to help democratic societies emerge as examples for people across all regions.

“We're pressing nations around the world — including our friends — to trust their people with greater freedom of speech, and worship, and assembly,” Bush said. “We're advancing a broader vision of reform that includes economic prosperity, and quality health care and education, and vibrant civil societies, and women's rights.”

President Bush Says It's Time for Mugabe Regime to Go*Urges all African leaders to call for Mugabe to leave office*By Charles W. Corey
Staff Writer

Washington — “It is time for Robert Mugabe to go,” President Bush said December 9 as he urged African leaders from across the region “to step up and join the growing chorus of voices calling for an end to Mugabe’s tyranny.”

In a written statement, Bush said: “Across the continent, African voices are bravely speaking out to say now is the time for him to step down. These leaders share the desire of ordinary Zimbabweans for a return to peace, democracy, and prosperity. We urge others from the region to step up and join the growing chorus of voices calling for an end to Mugabe’s tyranny.”

Bush pledged that the United States will continue to work with its partners around the world to halt the violence and stem the humanitarian disaster that the Mugabe regime is inflicting on its people.

“We stand ready to help rebuild Zimbabwe once a legitimate government has been formed that reflects the results of the March elections,” he added.

U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe James D. McGee echoed that point December 8 as he received the Diplomacy for Freedom Award from the U.S. Department of State at a ceremony commemorating International Human Rights Week.

African leaders must “stand up to Mugabe,” a leader who “needs to go,” McGee told America.gov in an interview shortly after he received the award, adding that the people of Zimbabwe should continue to have hope for better times ahead.

“For the sake of the people of Zimbabwe, Mugabe has to step down,” he said.

McGee asked the people of Zimbabwe to “continue to have hope. Hope is the only thing that is going to take this country out of the dire predicament that it is in. The illegitimate, the illegal Robert Mugabe regime must come to an end and it must come to an end very soon,” McGee said.

“Just as President Bush stated last week, and as we continue to say, this government has no business ruling the fine country of Zimbabwe. The people there deserve so, so much better,” McGee told America.gov.

Asked what the United States is doing to help the people of Zimbabwe, McGee said: “Last year, the United States put about \$300 million of assistance into Zimbabwe. About \$218 million of that is in food assistance and the rest is assistance to organizations such as the World Food Programme, The Global Fund and direct assistance for health care and those types of issues. HIV/AIDS — the prevalence rate in Zimbabwe has dropped about 4 percent over the past three years,” he said, “due in large part to contributions made by the United States government.”

Commenting on the cholera epidemic now gripping the country, McGee called that situation “totally out of control. It is a reflection of the inability and unwillingness of the [Mugabe] government to take care of its people. This is a situation that did not need to happen, but the government is unwilling to put the money into taking care of its own people. The hospitals are closed, sewage is in the streets. We have no water in the city [Harare]. Of course we are going to have cholera.”

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice presented McGee with his award on behalf of the State Department’s Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, as part of its commemoration of Human Rights Week 2008. In her remarks, Rice also again called for Mugabe to leave office.

“I [recently] said in Denmark that it is high time for President Mugabe to go and, Ambassador McGee, I know that you have tried to work to make the electoral process fair and then to make the power-sharing arrangements work.

“But, ultimately,” she continued, “you are working with and for the United States government to make life better for the Zimbabwean people. We deeply hope that that will soon come. It will come only, though, if there is a concerted international response, especially by the countries of the region, to the terrible, terrible humanitarian disaster that has now broken out,” which includes the cholera epidemic, and the “terrible and outrageous behavior of the Mugabe government, and you are leading that effort internationally.”

Rice told those gathered in the State Department’s elegant Treaty Room that “at a time of deepening crisis in Zimbabwe, Ambassador McGee has developed a strategy for his embassy that is designed to support the Zimbabwean people’s demand for democratic change and to train a spotlight on the mounting human rights abuses and to press for free and fair presidential elections.

“In the aftermath of the presidential election in March and

in anticipation of the runoff vote in June, the Mugabe regime unleashed a reign of terror against the political opposition and barred most international media from Zimbabwe," she said.

Rice praised McGee and his embassy team for personally leading convoys of diplomats from like-minded countries and U.S. Embassy personnel to rural hot spots to talk with victims of persecution and witnesses to violence, often greatly risking their own personal safety.

"Ambassador McGee's strategy of exposing regime violence helped to establish a truth that could not be ignored and contributed to mounting international pressure on Mugabe and his party to enter into a power-sharing arrangement. Thus far, the Mugabe government has refused to implement this agreement in good faith," Rice said.

Russian Journalist, Two Americans Receive Human Rights Awards

Journalist Yulia Latynina recognized for fighting corruption, abuses

By Merle D. Kellerhals Jr.
Staff Writer

Washington — An independent Russian journalist who exposed corruption and abuses of authority among government officials has been honored by the United States for her investigative reporting and hard-hitting commentary in the effort to advance human rights in Russia.

Yulia Latynina, who works at radio station Echo of Moscow and also writes for The Moscow Times and Novaya Gazeta, was presented with the Freedom Defenders Award at a State Department ceremony honoring defenders of human rights on the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

"Over the past six decades, democracy has spread across the globe, accompanied by remarkable gains for the rights that the declaration enumerates," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said during the December 8 ceremony. "Yet, we are sobered by the fact that hundreds of millions of people are still denied fundamental freedoms by their governments."

The promotion of human rights and individual freedom is a significant foreign policy commitment of the Bush administration in what the president has called "the non-negotiable demands of human dignity," Rice said.

The Freedom Defenders Award given to Latynina is presented annually to a foreign citizen or nongovernmental organization that has shown exceptional courage and leadership, Rice said. "Yulia has exposed corruption and abuses of authority among government officials as well as egregious human rights violations by both government authorities and private actors, particularly in the North Caucasus," Rice said.

"With great bravery, she has been outspoken in the defense of besieged fellow journalists at a time of growing self-censorship or forced silence."

Rice said that in Russia there are disturbing efforts to increase control over, and pressure on, the media, as part of the emergence of clearly authoritarian trends. Members of the independent media have been victims of violent attacks committed by perpetrators who have yet to be brought to justice, she said.

"In the last 15 years, some 300 journalists have been killed in Russia, making it the third-deadliest country for journalists worldwide," Rice said.

STATE DEPARTMENT HONOREES

U.S. Ambassador to Zimbabwe James McGee was awarded the Diplomacy for Freedom Award for his efforts to help the people of Zimbabwe in demanding democratic change. McGee has developed a strategy for the American Embassy to help Zimbabweans in their struggle to bring about democratic changes in their country.

McGee has helped focus a spotlight on the mounting human rights abuses and has pressed for free and fair presidential elections, Rice said. He is also leading an international humanitarian effort to help Zimbabwe cope with a cholera epidemic.

Michael DeTar, the chief of the political section of the U.S. Embassy in Colombo, Sri Lanka, was awarded the Human Rights and Democracy Achievement Award for seeking ways to curb human rights abuses that have escalated over the last two years by the warring parties in Sri Lanka's 25-year internal conflict.

"Michael found creative and pragmatic ways to engage constructively with Sri Lanka while underscoring our human rights concerns," Rice said. "Michael helped position the United States to play a leading role in the stabilization and recovery of the conflict-torn Eastern province, focusing on disarming and demobilizing paramilitaries there."

DeTar was also a key participant in the international effort to monitor an official Commission of Inquiry investigating high-profile cases of human rights abuse, Rice said. He has also responded quickly and effectively when journalists and other activists have been threatened or arrested, she said.

And Rice said that DeTar proposed a road map to induce a paramilitary aligned with the government to begin releasing its child soldiers.

Aid Agencies Join to Improve Effectiveness in Poor Countries

Latest collaboration aimed at boosting agricultural sectors

By Kathryn McConnell

Staff Writer

Washington — Poor countries receiving grants from the U.S. Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) will be able to get more impact from that aid under new agreements between MCC and other major aid agencies.

“We are enhancing our efforts by partnering with organizations that share our core belief that generating sustainable prosperity, development and growth can improve the lives of the poor,” MCC Chief Executive Officer John Danilovich wrote in a blog posted on MCC's Web site.

MCC's most recent agreement was with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). Danilovich and Josette Sheeran, WFP executive director, December 5 agreed that the two aid agencies would coordinate funding to stabilize domestic agricultural supplies and local markets in poor countries.

One potential area of collaboration will be linking MCC's funding for agricultural development with WFP's Purchase for Progress program, in which the agency buys locally produced food from small farmers for distribution as food aid.

By providing a reliable market for smallholder farmers, cooperatives and small traders, WFP wants to increase producers' incomes and give them a strong incentive to invest and increase production, the agency says.

Purchasing from small producers also can stimulate local economies, a principal MCC objective, Danilovich told America.gov.

The partnership with MCC provides a new opportunity for WFP to link its humanitarian assistance with long-term

solutions to hunger, Sheeran said when signing the agreement at MCC headquarters in Washington.

Danilovich and Sheeran also agreed to share ideas so they can be more effective in assisting host countries to reform their poverty reduction and food security policies to reflect best practices in achieving gender equality, according to MCC.

MCC investments in developing robust agricultural sectors aim to give rural families and businesses the capacity to provide for themselves and their communities today and to acquire greater capacity to face potential food crises in the future.

More productive agricultural sectors also will help ensure that the increasing number of people moving to urban areas have access to affordable, safe food, MCC says.

Also collaborating with MCC and WFP is the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), an international nonprofit established in 2006 with funding from the Rockefeller Foundation and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In June, AGRA's head, former U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and Danilovich agreed to join to help African countries tackle poverty and hunger through sustainable improvements in the productivity and incomes of small-scale farmers and poor rural households.

The partnership approach between AGRA, WFP and MCC “prevents duplication of efforts, enhances the impact of each project activity and helps our partners attract investments in long-term growth,” Danilovich wrote in his blog.

In November, MCC and the Agence Française de Développement agreed to coordinate to make poverty reduction more effective in the developing world, beginning in African countries where both agencies are engaged — Burkina Faso, Benin, Morocco, Mali, Madagascar and Senegal. Agence Française de Développement is France's finance agency focused on international development.

In October, MCC signed an agreement with Denmark's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to increase coordination in countries in which both work — including Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mali, Mozambique, Nicaragua and Tanzania. The agencies will work to identify opportunities for private sector investment, especially in agribusiness, and in using microfinance to prepare for projects devoted to the climate

and environment.

In February, MCC and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development agreed to increase on-the-ground cooperation in partner countries including Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania and Zambia in education, water and sanitation, transportation and governance, especially related to transparency and anti-corruption.

Since 2004, MCC has obligated nearly \$6.3 billion in grants to 18 countries receiving MCC multiyear anti-poverty grants.

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