



EN ESPAÑOL

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This is a pivotal moment in our history. Our security is threatened. Our nation is at war. Our planet is in peril. The strength, standing and leadership in the world that so many generations of Americans have fought and worked for is at stake.

Iowans understand this. Everywhere I go – from Sioux City to Des Moines to Davenport – I'm asked about the changes we need to make in our foreign policy. You understand that in a world of stateless terrorists and spreading technology, our own security and prosperity is tied to what happens around the world. You want to be proud of what America stands for, and you know that America is stronger - and safer - when our policies reflect our core values.

This came up in our recent debate here in Des Moines. I was asked how I plan to change our foreign policy, even as I'm advised by members of previous Administrations. I'm thankful to be joined on this stage today by two of those advisors - Tony Lake and Susan Rice, as well as General Scott Graton and Senator Steve Wamstadt. And I look forward to drawing on all of the talent that I can get when I am President of the United States - because unlike George Bush, I'm not going to demand an ideological or loyalty test for my advisors.

But the answer to the question is simple. There are moments in history when it is not enough to fall back on conventional ways of doing things, because the threats we face are unconventional. There are moments when we're called to stand up for what is right even if it's not popular, because that's what makes us stronger and safer. There are moments when new challenges demand new American leadership.

This is one of those moments; I am running for President to offer that leadership; and I welcome the support of all who will help me chart this course.

I am running to do more than end a war in Iraq - I am running to change the mindset that got us into war. It's easy for us to lay all of the problems of the world at George Bush's doorstep. His judgments will be subject to the harsh light of history, and the verdict will not be kind. But the question is what comes next. Because we also have to change a conventional way of thinking about foreign policy that values time spent in Washington over timely judgments; posturing over pragmatism; and fear of looking weak over the conviction to get things right. Here, I ask you to look no further than my record.

George Bush did not take us to war alone. Congress gave him that authority when it voted for a Resolution with the simple title: "A Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq." I opposed the war, and spoke out against it in 2002 when it was not politically popular. I said we needed to finish the job in Afghanistan, and that invading and occupying a country that had nothing to do with 9/11 was the wrong way to respond to the unconventional challenge posed by al Qaeda and Islamic extremism.

Today, we see the disastrous results of the decision to go to war. Still, we have not shown that we are learning the right lessons.

On Iraq, we hear that the surge is succeeding. Let me be clear: the surge is not the solution to Iraq's problems because it is not achieving the political benchmarks that were the stated purpose of our troop increase. You cannot end a civil war unless the warring parties resolve their differences, and only a removal of our combat brigades will put meaningful pressure on the Iraqis to do so.

And the surge continues to focus our resources on the wrong war. Just yesterday, we learned on the front page of the Washington Post that the U.S. military is pressing for a quicker drawdown from Iraq so we can salvage stability in Afghanistan. Six years after we took our eye off the ball in Afghanistan - the origin of the 9/11 attacks - we still don't have our priorities straight. That's

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why it's time to stop funding a failed policy, to remove our combat brigades from Iraq, and to increase our military, political, and economic commitment to Afghanistan. That's what I spoke out for in 2002, that's what I've called for in this campaign, and that's what I'll do as President.

In Iran, there is a conventional thinking that has prized bluster over common sense. Earlier this year, while I was getting attacked for calling for direct diplomacy with Iran's leaders, others were talking tough and voting for an amendment that calls for George Bush to use our troops in Iraq to counter Iran. Then we learned in a National Intelligence Estimate that Iran suspended its nuclear weapons program in 2003 in response to international pressure.

Now make no mistake - Iran continues to pose a threat through its support for terrorism, nuclear know-how, and threats toward Israel. But the answer is not George Bush's saber-rattling - it's the diplomatic approach that I put forward when it was politically risky. As President, I will personally present Iran with a choice - stop your dangerous behavior and there will be political and economic incentives; continue doing what you're doing and you will face further isolation.

We need a President who is willing to talk to all nations - friend and foe. Not talking doesn't make us look tough, it makes us look arrogant. It also makes it harder to get international support when we do need to pressure countries like Iran, and opens the door to China and Russia to fill the vacuum left by the absence of American leadership. We have to stop giving countries the excuse that America will not come to the table. We have to lead, and that's what I intend to do.

When you elect our next President, you will choose someone to make those tough judgments on Iraq, on Iran, on how to restore America's standing. We know what we're going to get from the Republican nominee. More Bush-Cheney foreign policy. More support for open-ended war in Iraq. More saber-rattling toward Iran. More refusing to talk to countries we don't like. More exceptions and excuses made for torture. They even had a debate earlier this year where they argued about how much to expand Guantanamo.

When I'm the Democratic nominee, I will offer a clear choice. My opponent won't be able to say that I ever supported the war in Iraq, or that I don't support a clear timetable to bring our troops home. He won't be able to say that I voted to use our troops in Iraq to counter Iran, or that I support the Bush-Cheney diplomacy of not talking to leaders we don't like. And he won't be able to say that I wavered on something as fundamental as whether or not it is ok for America to torture -because it is never ok.

This isn't about drawing contrasts - it's about a change in our foreign policy that you can believe in. So when you consider who to caucus for, I ask you to consider my judgment and vision for new American leadership. Leadership that brings our combat brigades out of Iraq in 16 months, renews American diplomacy, finishes the fight in Afghanistan, closes Guantanamo, and leads the world against the common threats of the 21st century - nuclear weapons and terrorism; climate change and poverty; genocide and disease. Leadership that sends a message to those yearning faces beyond our shores that says, "You matter to us. Your future is our future. And our moment is now."

It's a vision informed by three years serving on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, where I have worked across the aisle with Dick Lugar to keep the world's most dangerous weapons away from terrorists; and introduced legislation to stop the war in Iraq and the genocide in Darfur.

It's a vision informed by three years serving on the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, where I have seen firsthand the sacrifices of those who bear the burden of war, and fought to give them the care, benefits, and respect that they have earned.

It's a vision informed by official travel overseas to Africa; throughout the Middle East; and across the former Soviet Union - where I have seen firsthand the unconventional threats of a terrorized city and the terrible danger of a loose anthrax vial; but where I also saw the yearning in the eyes of those faces who need an America that speaks to their hopes, not just their fears.

It's a vision informed by my opposition to this war in Iraq, and by the counsel I have received from leading experts like the people on this stage today.

And it's a vision informed by knowing what it's like to live in the wider world, beyond the halls of power; of playing barefoot with children in Indonesia who couldn't dream the same dreams that I could because they weren't American; of having a grandmother living in Kenya without electricity or plumbing; of being born to a father who set out from a distant land in search of the light of hope offered by a dream called America.

That is the experience that I will bring to the office. Not the mindset of fear that we have been fed since 9/11 - fear of looking weak; fear of new challenges; fear of the unknown. But rather hope that this moment of challenge can become a dawn of new opportunity, and the conviction to seize this opportunity - to recapture our strength; to overcome new threats; to reach for what's possible.

To do this, we have to invite the American people into the discussion, and once more make our

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foreign policy a cause to unite us - not a wedge issue to divide us. That's why I have been clear and detailed in my proposals during this campaign. And that's why I'm pleased to join some of my advisors in an open discussion with lowans today.

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