

As set out on the White House website "Our country's greatest military asset is the men and women who wear the uniform of the United States. When we do send our men and women into harm's way, we must also clearly define the mission, prescribe concrete political and military objectives, seek out the advice of our military commanders, evaluate the intelligence, plan accordingly, and ensure that our troops have the resources, support, and equipment they need to protect themselves and fulfill their mission." -- Barack Obama, Chicago Foreign Affairs Council April 23, 2007

President Obama and Vice President Biden will invest in a 21st century military to maintain our conventional advantage while increasing our capacity to defeat the threats of tomorrow. They will ensure our troops have the training, equipment and support that they need when they are deployed.

Invest in a 21st Century Military

Rebuild the Military for 21st Century Tasks: Obama and Biden believe that we must build up our special operations forces, civil affairs, information operations, and other units and capabilities that remain in chronic short supply; invest in foreign language training, cultural awareness, and human intelligence and other needed counterinsurgency and stabilization skill sets; and create a more robust capacity to train, equip, and advise foreign security forces, so that local allies are better prepared to confront mutual threats.

Expand to Meet Military Needs on the Ground: Obama and Biden support plans to increase the size of the Army by 65,000 soldiers and the Marine Corps by 27,000 Marines. Increasing our end strength will help units retrain and re-equip properly between deployments and decrease the strain on military families.

Leadership from the Top: President Obama and Vice President Biden will inspire a new generation of Americans to serve their country, whether it be in local communities in such roles as teachers or first responders, or serving in the military to keep our nation free and safe.

Lighten the Burdens on Our Brave Troops and Their Families: The Obama-Biden Administration will create a Military Families Advisory Board to provide a conduit for military families' concerns to be brought to the attention of senior policymakers and the public. Obama and Biden will end the stop-loss policy and establish predictability in deployments so that active duty and reserves know what they can and must expect.

Build Defense Capabilities for the 21st Century

Fully Equip Our Troops for the Missions They Face: Barack Obama and Joe Biden believe we must get essential equipment to our soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines before lives are lost.

Review Weapons Programs: We must rebalance our capabilities to ensure that our forces can succeed in both conventional wars and in stabilization and counter-insurgency operations. Obama and Biden have committed to a review of each major defense program in light of current needs, gaps in the field, and likely future threat scenarios in the post-9/11 world.

Preserve Global Reach in the Air: We must preserve our unparalleled airpower capabilities to deter and defeat any conventional competitors, swiftly respond to crises across the globe, and support our ground forces. We need greater investment in advanced technology ranging from the revolutionary, like Unmanned Aerial Vehicles and electronic warfare capabilities, to essential systems like the C-17 cargo and KC-X air refueling aircraft, which provide the backbone of our ability to extend global power.

Maintain Power Projection at Sea: We must recapitalize our naval forces, replacing aging ships and modernizing existing platforms, while adapting them to the 21st century. Obama and Biden will add to the Maritime Pre-Positioning Force Squadrons to support operations ashore and invest in smaller, more capable ships, providing the agility to operate close to shore and the reach to rapidly deploy Marines to global crises.

National Missile Defense: The Obama-Biden Administration will support missile defense, but ensure that

it is developed in a way that is pragmatic and cost-effective; and, most importantly, does not divert resources from other national security priorities until we are positive the technology will protect the American public.

Ensure Freedom of Space: The Obama-Biden Administration will restore American leadership on space issues, seeking a worldwide ban on weapons that interfere with military and commercial satellites. They will thoroughly assess possible threats to U.S. space assets and the best options, military and diplomatic, for countering them, establishing contingency plans to ensure that U.S. forces can maintain or duplicate access to information from space assets and accelerating programs to harden U.S. satellites against attack.

Protect the U.S in Cyberspace: The Obama-Biden Administration cooperate with our allies and the private sector to identify and protect against emerging cyber-threats.

Restore the Readiness of the National Guard and Reserves

Equip, Support, and Modernize the National Guard and Reserves: Barack Obama and Joe Biden will provide the National Guard with the equipment it needs for foreign and domestic emergencies and time to restore and refit before deploying. They will make the head of the National Guard a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to ensure concerns of our citizen soldiers reach the level they mandate. They will ensure that reservists and Guard members are treated fairly when it comes to employment, health, and education benefits

Develop Whole of Government Initiatives to Promote Global Stability

Integrate Military and Civilian Efforts: The Obama-Biden Administration will build up the capacity of each non-Pentagon agency to deploy personnel and area experts where they are needed, to help move soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines out of civilian roles.

Create a Civilian Assistance Corps (CAC): Obama and Biden will create a national CAC of 25,000 personnel. This corps of civilian volunteers with special skill sets (doctors, lawyers, engineers, city planners, agriculture specialists, police, etc.) would be organized to provide each federal agency with a pool of volunteer experts willing to deploy in times of need at home and abroad.

Restore Our Alliances

Engage Our Allies in Meeting Our Common Security Challenges: America's traditional alliances, such as NATO, must be transformed and strengthened, including on common security concerns like Afghanistan, homeland security, and counterterrorism. President Obama and Vice President Biden will renew alliances and ensure our allies contribute their fair share to our mutual security.

Organize to Help Our Partners and Allies in Need: The Obama-Biden Administration will expand humanitarian activities that build friendships and attract allies at the regional and local level (such as during the response to the tsunami in South and Southeast Asia), and win hearts and minds in the process.

Reform Contracting

Create Transparency for Military Contractors: President Obama and Vice President Biden will require the Pentagon and State Department to develop a strategy for determining when contracting makes sense, rather than continually handing off governmental jobs to well-connected companies. They will create the transparency and accountability needed for good governance, and establish the legal status of contractor personnel, making possible prosecution of any abuses committed by private military contractors.

Restore Honesty, Openness, and Commonsense to Contracting and Procurement: The Obama-Biden Administration will realize savings by reducing the corruption and cost overruns that have become all too routine in defense contracting. This includes launching a program of acquisition reform and management, which would end the common practice of no-bid contracting. Obama and Biden will end the abuse of supplemental budgets by creating a system of oversight for war funds as stringent as in the regular budget. Obama and Biden will restore the government's ability to manage contracts by rebuilding our

contract officer corps. They will order the Justice Department to prioritize prosecutions that will punish and deter fraud, waste and abuse</p>