



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

**UNITED STATES  
COUNTERTERRORISM  
STRATEGY**

---

---

**2026**



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Presidential Foreword .....	3
Introduction   Good versus Bad Counterterrorism.....	4
The Threat.....	5
Our Counterterrorism Strategy .....	6
Our CT Principles .....	6
Our CT Priorities.....	6
The Goals of Our CT Strategy .....	7
Counterterrorism Resources.....	8
Counterterrorism and Presidential Diplomacy.....	9
Counterterrorism by Region .....	10
Terrorists and Weapons of Mass Destruction.....	15
America First Counterterrorism.....	16

## PRESIDENTIAL FOREWORD

When I returned to the White House on January 20, 2025, four years of weakness, failure, surrender, and humiliation under the last administration came to an end. Today, our nation is strong, our borders are secure, and the United States is respected all over the world. We are once again putting America First.

As part of my commitment to defending America from all enemies, foreign and domestic, we are once again working to crush the threat of terrorism. Within 43 days, we apprehended the terrorist mastermind of the attack on Abbey Gate in Afghanistan that left 13 American service members dead. In just one year, we brought back 106 American hostages from captivity abroad without paying a single dollar to their captors. We designated key chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood as the terrorist groups they have always been. We mobilized the Department of Homeland Security to remove illegal alien criminals and Jihadist sympathizers from our country. We ended the war in Gaza, secured the release of all remaining hostages, and began the process of ensuring Gaza can no longer serve as a haven for terrorism and extremism by bringing security and prosperity to the region through the Board of Peace. Operation Midnight Hammer and Operation Epic Fury have dealt devastating blows to the world's number one state sponsor of terror, the sinister regime in Iran, to ensure they can never have a nuclear weapon.

At the same time, my Administration has put an unprecedented focus on dismantling threats to the American homeland in our Hemisphere. We are no longer permitting the cartels and gangs who have poisoned millions of Americans to freely operate in our region or smuggle their drugs, guns, or trafficked women and children into our country. Last year, I rightfully designated the deadly cartels as terrorist organizations, and began using the strength and power of the U.S. military to stop and destroy their operations. Our Armed Forces also demonstrated their incredible power and skill by capturing the narco-terrorist outlaw Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro, bringing him to face American justice. We will not let cartels, Jihadists, or the governments who support them plot against our citizens with impunity. Terrorists of any kind will not be allowed to find safe harbor here at home or attack us from abroad.

Our new U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy is a return to common sense and Peace through Strength. As I said after our first successful counterterrorism mission, just days after I was sworn back in office – if you hurt Americans, or are planning to hurt Americans, “We Will Find You and We Will Kill You.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Donald Trump', written in a cursive style.

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
May 2026

# INTRODUCTION | GOOD VERSUS BAD COUNTERTERRORISM

---

*“In our every principle and action, America and Americans must always come first.”*

President Trump, (NSS)

---

Under the Trump Administration, protecting the United States and our citizens is once again the goal of our national security and foreign policy. That is what we mean by America First. America First has a wide variety of components, from securing our borders to bringing jobs back to America, all to the benefit of the American people.

Counterterrorism (CT) is a core part the national security mission, and its primary objective is to protect Americans from being harmed by terrorist groups and to deter and undermine the support they



*President Donald J. Trump highlights the importance of Peace through Strength during a visit to Al Udeid Air Base, Qatar, May 15, 2025.*

receive from enemy actors. Additionally, we recognize that a new type of domestic terrorism has emerged, driven by violent extremists who have adopted ideologies antithetical to freedom and the American way of life.

Our counterterrorism operations will be executed apolitically and founded upon reality-based threat assessments. Our counterterrorism powers will not be used to target our fellow Americans who simply disagree with us. We will not permit the weaponization of America’s unparalleled CT capabilities for partisan purposes and in contravention of every American’s God-given rights.

The fact pattern under the Biden Administration was clear: individuals at the highest level of the U.S. Government used their significant powers to politically target individuals in the interests of those they favored, wanted to keep in power, or to help win elections. Millions of Americans have lost confidence in the rectitude of the most powerful elements of our Federal government; the national security apparatus of the United States. That confidence can only be won back when counterterrorism is executed uninfected by politics, and if those who used their counterterrorism powers as a weapon against the innocent pay the full judicial cost for their crimes against the civil rights of innocent Americans.

As President Trump stated in his 2025 National Security Strategy, the “[D]epartments and agencies of the United States Government have been granted fearsome powers. Those powers must never be

abused, whether under the guise of ‘deradicalization,’ ‘protecting our democracy,’ or any other pretext. When and where those powers are abused, abusers must be held accountable.” A radical shift is therefore needed in U.S. counterterrorism, as demonstrated by our successes in the first year of the second Trump Administration.

## THE THREAT

---

*“We must protect our country from invasion, not just from unchecked migration but from cross-border threats such as terrorism, drugs, espionage, and human trafficking.”*

President Trump, (NSS)

---

Under the leadership of President Trump, America is again the world’s most powerful nation, with the largest economy in history, the most advanced technologies, and the bravest and most skilled warfighters the world has ever seen. This newfound strength has been amply demonstrated by historic operations such as the neutralization of the Iranian nuclear threat under Operation Midnight Hammer and Operation Epic Fury and the arrest and rendition of Venezuelan dictator Nicolás Maduro under Operation Absolute Resolve.

But the terrorist threat has changed. We face new categories and combinations of violent actors that make the established ways of doing counterterrorism insufficient or obsolete. We face a multiplicity of deadly threats from terror groups and non-state actors often secretly supported by governments who wish to undermine us.

Currently we face three major types of terror groups:

- Narcoterrorists and Transnational Gangs
- Legacy Islamist Terrorists
- Violent Left-Wing Extremists, including Anarchists and Anti-Fascists

We can defeat every single one of these groups, but the threat is significant and pervasive.

The borderless America created by the Biden Administration was so badly exploited by threat actors that during one 12-month period of the previous administration, more Americans died as a result of the illicit drugs flooded into the country by the cartels than all the U.S. servicemen killed in combat since 1945. That is an existential threat that President Trump does not tolerate.

# OUR COUNTERTERRORISM STRATEGY

## OUR CT PRINCIPLES

America's new U.S. Counterterrorism Strategy is driven by the principle that America is our homeland. Americans should be safe to live their lives without the fear of terror attacks, the threat of Jihadists, the flooding of our communities with deadly drugs at the hands of foreign narcoterrorists, or violent left-wing extremists who have adopted radical ideologies antithetical to the principles upon which our Republic was founded. Additionally, we will continue to ensure our CT structures are not weaponized against the American people, as prior administrations allowed.

When it comes to state actors, our priority is to identify and fully degrade the lines of covert support provided to cartels and Islamists by our adversaries. This includes overt actions, such as sanctions, shadow fleet oil tanker interdiction, and covert operations to make funding and state-sponsorship very costly to inimical regimes, including their provision of dual-use technologies – especially drones, advanced conventional weapons, or the precursor chemicals used to make deadly narcotics. These CT operations include offensive cyber operations against those planning to kill Americans or who support those plotting to do so.

## OUR CT PRIORITIES

Our CT Strategy first prioritizes the neutralization of hemispheric terror threats by incapacitating cartel operations until these groups are incapable of bringing their drugs, their members, and their trafficked victims into the United States. At the same time, we will continue to find and remove the cartel and gang members who were let into our country under the Biden Administration while using FTO designations to strangle the commercial and logistical sinews of their organizations.

Jihadi terrorists have continued to plot against and kill Americans, in part because of the failed “forever war” policies of prior Republican administrations, the empowerment of terror-sponsoring regimes like Iran under Democrat administrations, and a past unwillingness to challenge Islamist ideologies head on. As a result, our second priority is the targeting and destruction of the top five Islamist terror groups that have the intent and capabilities to execute External Operations against the United States, starting with al Qaeda – especially its most aggressive subgroup, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) – and ISIS, starting with ISIS-Khorasan (ISIS-K). With the FTO-designation of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), we will continue maintaining pressure on the global Jihadi movement until global MB enterprises can no longer recruit and fund terror against the United States.

Our nation has not been well served by its Intelligence Community (IC), which has been mired in old ways of looking at threats, or has been actively weaponized by its leadership as a political tool. Whether plotting against conservative Catholics attending traditional mass in Virginia, parents standing up for their children at schoolboard meetings, Members of Congress, or President Trump and his associates, this Administration will continue to prohibit the IC from being used politically against innocent Americans. As real threats were ignored or underplayed, Americans have witnessed the politically motivated killings of Christians and conservatives committed by violent left-wing

extremists, including the assassination of Charlie Kirk by a radical who espoused extreme transgender ideologies.

In addition to cartels and Islamist terror groups, our national CT activities will also prioritize the rapid identification and neutralization of violent secular political groups whose ideology is anti-American, radically pro-transgender, and anarchist. We will use all the tools constitutionally available to us to map them at home, identify their membership, map their ties to international organizations like Antifa, and use law enforcement tools to cripple them operationally before they can maim or kill the innocent. We will do the same with the state sponsors of such groups and those governments undertaking lethal plots on U.S. soil or against Americans anywhere.

Finally, and in a special strategic category, we will maintain and increase our national assets to combat and render safe the most dangerous terrorist threat to America: non-state acquisition and use of weapons of mass destruction, especially the terrorist use of nuclear or radiological devices. This mission, and the attribution of nuclear threats, remain Presidential priorities as laid out during the first Trump Administration in NSPM-35 and NSPM-36. Technological advances since then necessitate a re-examination of the threat and an update to our relevant CT policies.

## **THE GOALS OF OUR CT STRATEGY**

The mission of the counterterrorism structures of the U.S. Government is to identify those groups that have the intent and capability to plot attacks against Americans and then neutralize them.

This mission can be broken down into three simple functions:

- Identify terror actors and plots before they happen.
- Cut off their arms, funding, and recruiting streams.
- Ultimately destroy established threat groups.

This necessitates:

- Designation of cartels and transnational gangs as FTOs to make available additional intelligence authorities and deny and disrupt their financial streams and access to the United States.
- Taking necessary and specific actions in self-defense to neutralize imminent threats to the United States.
- A series of similar high-intensity but short campaigns against the five Jihadist groups deemed by the CIA as the most dangerous and capable of External Operations targeting the American homeland and U.S. citizens. This includes al Qaeda and ISIS.
- Diplomatic, financial, cyber, and covert actions to undermine or deter inimical state actors from assisting designated FTOs – whether cartels, Jihadists, or violent left-wing radicals.

As the world's most powerful nation, our means to achieve these goals are tremendous, but not unlimited. We must therefore prioritize our targets and our operations against them.

Beyond the three categories of terrorist threats to the homeland, our Counterterrorism Strategy addresses five functional aspects of the current CT environment:

- New and evolving collaboration between nation-states and threat groups such as cartels.
- New and deepening alliances between the far-left and Islamists, i.e., the “Red-Green” alliance.
- New and evolving alliances between established terrorist groups, such as the collaboration between Al Shabaab and the Houthis.
- Exploitation of new weapons, like drones, by cartels and Jihadists, as well as the provision of these technologies to terrorists by state actors, namely, Iran, China, and Russia.
- The remaining threat of terrorists acquiring and using nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons – President Trump has rightly labeled “*the single greatest threat to this world.*”

Additionally, there is the special category of terror-like actions taken by state actors, including acts of sabotage and the use of proxies, assassinations, and what some of our allies have labeled “hybrid” attacks. We will continue to work with our CT partners to make it impossible for such state-driven terrorism to occur in the homeland.

## COUNTERTERRORISM RESOURCES

The National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy clearly articulate America’s significant means and resources to sustain and defend our people and way of life, from our sacred geography, incredible natural and human resources, and unparalleled wealth powered by limitless innovation to a historic work ethic that have made us the greatest power on Earth.

When it comes to counterterrorism, our resources specifically include intelligence agencies and units who, since 9/11, have become the world’s best at “Finding and Fixing” high value targets anywhere in the world. They also include Tier 1 and Tier 2 military units without peer anywhere in the world able to close with and “finish” these targets.



Two Screen captures on September 15, 2025, depicting a U.S. military strike on a Venezuelan drug cartel vessel on its way to the United States.

Here at home, the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security have returned to their priority function of identifying, investigating, and arresting terrorists and cartel members before they kill or poison Americans. The Department of the Treasury's Threat Finance team, in collaboration with the Department of State, is aggressively targeting any entity or individual connected to designated terrorist organizations with sanctions.

Additionally, there are a number of nations around the world whose militaries, law enforcement agencies, and intelligence units have become the United States' close CT allies and partners. They too are valuable resources that we wish to increasingly lean on as we redistribute the burden of countering global terror threats, which the United States has borne disproportionately.

The above military, law enforcement, and intelligence activities will continue to be complemented and amplified by aggressive information operations to demoralize terror organizations and undermine their anti-American and anti-Western propaganda. We have assets outside the realms of hard security in the informational space that were allowed to atrophy in recent years or were used for partisan political purposes. These were previously de-weaponized and must now be reinvigorated to demoralize and delegitimize terror threat groups and their enablers.

## COUNTERTERRORISM AND PRESIDENTIAL DIPLOMACY



*American schoolteacher Marc Fogel, freed after three and a half years in prison, was welcomed home by the man who liberated him, President Donald Trump.*

Within our counterterrorism resources, one of our greatest non-kinetic tools is the power of presidential diplomacy. The safe return of all hostages and Americans Wrongfully Detained by authoritarian regimes is a number one priority for President Trump. As a result, more than 100 Americans have been brought back home in just the first 15 months of President Trump's second term.

America will never give up on our citizens. Countries that wrongfully detain our citizens run the danger of being designated as State Sponsors of Wrongful Detention, with all the attendant consequences that accrue, and as the regimes in

Iran and Afghanistan know, there are true consequences to this designation.

# COUNTERTERRORISM BY REGION

## A. OUR HEMISPHERE

The Trump Administration is in large part defined by a return to common sense which dictates that some things are more important than others and that when it comes to geography, some regions are more important than others.

---

*“After years of neglect, the United States will reassert and enforce the Monroe Doctrine to restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere, and to protect our homeland.”*

President Trump, (NSS)

---

Understanding the untold carnage wreaked by the cartels against Americans for decades, especially during the borderless Biden years, on his first day back in office, President Trump designated the cartels and gangs flooding drugs, weapons, and illegal aliens into the United States as FTOs. The President has mandated that this problem be combated using the whole of government to ensure that we achieve our objective of degrading and eliminating the cartels and their ability to impact the national security of the United States.

The President has authorized dozens of strikes by the Department of War against cartel drug boats, resulting in a more than 90% decrease in maritime drug smuggling into the United States. Integrating countercartel and counterterrorism efforts allows the U.S. to disrupt the shared networks, financing, and logistical routes used by both designated drug traffickers and Islamist terrorists.

With Operation Absolute Resolve, President Trump took action where so many prior Presidents had not. In a textbook Special Operations mission in support of federal law enforcement, the illegitimate leader of Venezuela, a cartel boss in league with terror-sponsor Iran and its terror proxy Hezbollah, was apprehended and brought to the United States to face justice for his crimes against Americans.

The connections between the cartels and Jihadi terrorism are rooted in the massive drug revenues that fund terrorist organizations and transnational criminal networks and enable their operations against the United States. Operation Absolute Resolve proves that the “Trump Corollary,” the blueprint for a modern Monroe Doctrine, is already the reality in our Hemisphere.

We will continue our military and law enforcement campaigns against all the cartels and gangs designated as terrorist organizations by the President. At the same time, we will continue to target their finances and precursor supply lines to cripple their means of production and the movement of profits. We will do so in concert with local governments when they are willing and able to work with us. If they cannot, or will not, we will still take whatever action is necessary to protect our country, especially if the government in question is complicit with the cartels. Under President Trump, the United States will continue to dismantle the cartel networks and disrupt their recruiting and funding streams until they are neutralized and the regimes who helped them are no longer able to do so.

## B. THE MIDDLE EAST

The Middle East has been the main focus of U.S. counterterrorism since the rise of modern terrorism in the 1960s and following the attacks on 9/11. Our growing domestic energy production means the Middle East is no longer as central to America's stability, yet threats from this region remain, and our counterterrorism goals continue to be specific and rooted in realistic threat analysis.

On Day Eight of the second Trump Administration, President Trump gave the directive to revert to the CT rules of engagement used during his first term regarding strikes against terrorist targets, delegating much of that authority back down to Combatant

Commanders instead of the White House, as it was under the Biden Administration. This led to our first successful CT strike just three days later against a senior ISIS leader.

Since that first strike, our forces have neutralized hundreds of Jihadist terrorists in multiple countries, focusing on the five most dangerous Jihadi groups who are capable of External Operations. Our CT Strategy is predicated on maintaining and increasing that pressure on those groups until they no longer pose a threat to the homeland because they are destroyed, or because we can hand suppression operations over to capable allies or partners.

However, the greatest threat to the United States emanating from the Middle East comes specifically from Iran, directly in the form of its nuclear and missile capabilities, and indirectly in the form of the billions of dollars it funnels to its terror proxies, including Hezbollah.

Decisive actions by the President, such as the strike on Iranian terror-mastermind Qasem Soleimani during the first Trump Administration, Operation Midnight Hammer last year against Iran's nuclear capabilities, and Operation Epic Fury against Iran's military capacity and nuclear ambitions, will continue until the regime in Tehran is no longer a threat to the United States.

At the same time, we will continue to focus our kinetic, intelligence, and cyber operations against Iranian-backed terror proxies who plot against Americans, and we will take decisive action against regime actors who plot attacks against Americans in the homeland, as well as Iranian dissidents and Israelis in our country.

As part of our Counterterrorism Strategy, given that freedom of maritime navigation is crucial to the U.S. economy, we will not allow strategic waterways such as the Strait of Hormuz or Red Sea to be held hostage by non-state or state actors. In Yemen, we are prepared to take decisive military action again if our ships are endangered by the Houthis.

President Trump knows that all modern Jihadi groups, from al Qaeda to ISIS to Hamas, can trace their roots back to one organization: the Muslim Brotherhood. The MB is the root of all modern Islamist terrorism predicated on recreating the Muslim Caliphate and killing or enslaving non-

---

*"America will always have core interests in ensuring that Gulf energy supplies do not fall into the hands of an outright enemy, that the Strait of Hormuz remain open, that the Red Sea remain navigable, that the region not be an incubator or exporter of terror against American interests or the American homeland, and that Israel remain secure."*

President Trump, (NSS)

---

Muslims. That is why he took the historic step of issuing an Executive Order that declared the original Egyptian MB chapter, along with the Jordanian and Lebanese chapters, as FTOs, soon to be followed by others. Given the Muslim Brotherhood's key role in promoting modern terrorism, we will continue to designate its branches across the Middle East and beyond as FTOs to crush the organization everywhere it operates.

## C. EUROPE

The nations of Europe remain our preeminent and long-term counterterrorism partners. The world is safer when Europe is strong, but Europe is greatly threatened and is both a terror target and an incubator of terror threats.

Terrorists often seek to attack European nations to undermine their democratic institutions and their ties to the United States. Yet, a conglomerate of nefarious actors – al Qaeda,

ISIS, cartels, and state actors – have freely exploited Europe's weak borders and diminished CT resources to turn Europe into a permissive operating environment for plotting against Europeans and Americans. It is unacceptable that wealthy NATO allies can serve as financial, logistical, and recruitment hubs for terrorists. Europe still has an opportunity to change its individual and collective counterterrorism destiny if it recognizes the actual threat and takes action now.

Unfettered mass migration has been the transmission belt for terrorists. Europe can be strong again if it rediscovers traditional principles of freedom of speech, has honest conversations about Islamism, devotes sufficient resources to mitigate terrorism and cartel threats within its nations, and then actively shares its threat intelligence globally and moves counterterrorism burdenshifting to take greater responsibility for its own security. This includes CT operations in Africa.

Europe must significantly increase its CT efforts immediately. It is clear to all that well-organized hostile groups exploit open borders and related globalist ideals. The more these alien cultures grow, and the longer current European policies persist, the more terrorism is guaranteed. As the birthplace of Western culture and values, Europe must act now and halt its willful decline.

Under President Trump, America has returned to common sense and reality-based counterterrorism. We are working with allies and partners who share our threat assessment of cartels, Jihadists, and violent left-wing extremists. We are coordinating CT operations, sharing actionable intelligence, and providing expertise. We will continue to work with those nations who understand the threat, who take requisite actions themselves, and who are not undermining the principles that define our shared civilization. We will also work closely with our serious CT partners in Europe to jointly counter covert state action that looks like terrorism – to include sabotage and assassination plots – and which they have categorized as “hybrid threats.”

---

*“American officials have become used to thinking about European problems in terms of insufficient military spending and economic stagnation. There is truth to this, but Europe’s real problems are even deeper.”*

President Trump, (NSS)

---

## D. AFRICA

Perhaps the greatest counterterrorism victory of the first Trump Administration was the destruction of the physical Caliphate of ISIS. President Trump unleashed the greatest fighting force the world has ever seen, and within a matter of weeks, a Jihadi insurgency which controlled vast territories across Iraq and Syria was gone.

Subsequently, the surviving remnants of the world's most dangerous terrorist group of the modern age were forced to relocate to Africa and Central Asia, in turn exploiting the ungoverned spaces there, especially during the years of failed counterterrorism policies under President Biden. As a result, today there are parts of Africa where a resurgent terror threat is the reality. These include in West Africa, the Sahel region, the Lake Chad Basin, Mozambique, Sudan, and of course Somalia, where parts of ISIS have re-established themselves and Al Shabaab maintains its tribal-based Islamist insurgency.

In Africa, we have two clear goals that depart from the nation-building and interventionist policies of the past. The first is to guarantee that none of the Jihadi groups can build a base of operations that allows them to plot and execute attacks against the United States and American interests around the world. The second is to protect Christians, who have been slaughtered at the hands of these Jihadi groups.

After decades of forever wars that did not serve the interests of the American people, we are set on bringing home our troops and downsizing our global footprint. This, however, does not mean we will ignore threat groups in Africa capable of External Operations which seek to attack our interests. We are rebuilding bilateral CT relations with African governments who had been ignored or insulted by Biden-era neocolonial policies focused on globalist left-wing cultural hegemony. We will continue to work together with governments threatened by groups like ISIS and al Qaeda affiliates who threaten us as well, and assist them with actionable intelligence and CT partner-force development until our shared foes no longer pose a serious threat to either them or us. Wherever possible, we will marry such CT cooperation with the stabilizing effect of heightened trade and commercial relations, as witnessed by President Trump's historic peace deal between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo – an example of how security is a prerequisite for prosperity. We will also continue to use our breadth of tools for designating and targeting global terror networks and FTOs operating in Africa, such as the designation of the Sudanese and Egyptian chapters of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Secondly, the plight of the most persecuted people on Earth has been ignored for too long. While America is not a neocolonial power set on shaping African nations in its image, we will not permit terrorist groups operating on the continent to massacre Christians with impunity. With the decisive action President Trump recently took in Nigeria, he made it clear that the slaughter of Christians will not go unchecked. As President Trump said on Christmas Day in 2025: "I have previously warned these Terrorists that if they did not stop the slaughtering of Christians, there would be hell to pay, and tonight, there was."

In Africa, we will maintain a light military footprint and expect regional and nearby partners to accept a greater portion of the CT burden, share effective intelligence, and degrade common threats as they

arise. African nations have almost limitless potential, but only if their governments exercise sovereign control over their territory and close space to terrorists and violent extremists.

## E. ASIA

President Trump keeps his promises to the American people, especially to the families who lost loved ones to terror attacks under prior administrations. Just 43 days into his new term, as he was addressing a Joint Session of Congress, the President announced that the mastermind of the Abbey Gate massacre that killed 13 servicemembers in Afghanistan was arriving on U.S. soil that night to face justice. Whether the threat emanates from Central Asia or closer to home, it will continue to be dealt with under this Administration.

Asia includes the most populous Muslim nations and, as a region, is central in the spread of Islamist ideology, the recruiting of terrorists, and the raising of funds for attacks against the homeland and maritime trade routes vital to the United States and our partners, including Japan, South Korea, and Australia.

As recent attacks and disrupted terror plots inside America make clear, the South and Central Asian diaspora populations here, along with our Arab populations, are being targeted for radicalization by these terror groups. As a result, the United States and regional partners must jointly develop effective counter-propaganda means to identify and neutralize the media platforms of terrorist groups and identify and locate plotters before they can kill Americans. The United States is open to new partnerships in Asia where shared CT interests are identified.



*Mohammad Sharifullah, AKA Jafar, is apprehended and extradited for the murder of American warfighters at Abbey Gate in Afghanistan in August 2021.*

In 2025, President Trump rebuilt critical relationships with partners in South and Central Asia because these relationships are crucial to reducing the terrorist threat to the homeland. But our European partners must increase their CT operations in Asia, as in Africa and the Middle East. We will work with them, but will not bear the brunt of the burden to protect wealthy nations who should be able to act as mature counterterrorism actors.

Al Qaeda and ISIS still operate across numerous countries in Asia, exploiting ungoverned space to establish safe-havens, or in the case of Iran, are being directly sheltered by inimical regimes outside Asia. It is not cost-effective, wise, or even possible for the United States to continue to conduct CT activities everywhere, all at once, and in a vacuum. Peace can only be achieved through strength, therefore we will further burdenshare and burdenshift CT efforts to countries in South and Central Asia.

President Trump has ushered in a new dawn of burdenshifting, and now is the time to work more aggressively with partners to crush lingering terrorist threats to the United States, especially when it comes to External Operations-capable terror groups like al Qaeda and ISIS.

## TERRORISTS AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The primary responsibility of the U.S. Government's counterterrorism enterprise is to prevent a mass-casualty terror attack on American soil. Weapons of mass destruction (WMD) provide terrorists with the ultimate means to cause such harm. Therefore, preventing terrorists from developing, acquiring, or using chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons is a "no-fail" mission of U.S. counterterrorism efforts.

From Aum Shinrikyo's Tokyo Sarin gas attack in 1995, through al Qaeda's nuclear ambitions prior to and after 9/11, to ISIS seeking chemical weapons in the last decade, terrorists have consistently sought to develop, acquire, and use the most destructive technologies available.

To ensure any terrorists who credibly pose a threat to Americans never actually gain the capability to conduct a WMD attack:

- We will continue to work with partners to deny terrorists access to dangerous WMD-related materials, technologies, or information.
- We will continue to hold states that sponsor, supply, or facilitate WMD terrorism accountable for their actions.
- We will continue to maintain a robust counterterrorism WMD crisis-response capability to globally search for, characterize, defeat, attribute, identify the origin of, and provide for the safe disposition of WMD threat materials and devices.
- We will continue to enhance our capabilities to anticipate and manage the impact of emerging and disruptive technologies such as autonomous vehicles, artificial intelligence, additive manufacturing, and next-generation nuclear power.
- We will continue to combat illicit fentanyl and its core precursor chemicals as Weapons of Mass Destruction. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have died from fentanyl overdoses and we will hold accountable the FTOs, cartels, and their state sponsors for this WMD threat to our citizens.

In summary, the U.S. Government will use diplomatic, intelligence, military, economic, law-enforcement, and scientific capabilities, including kinetic and non-kinetic actions where appropriate, to thwart this threat.

## **AMERICA FIRST COUNTERTERRORISM**

For the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the 9/11 terror attacks, America has returned to a common sense and reality-based Counterterrorism Strategy.

President Trump has affected a complete revision of how we defeat threats to America predicated on national sovereignty and civilizational confidence and the objective of destroying the groups who would kill Americans or hurt our interests as a free nation. This applies to cartels, Jihadists, left-wing violent extremists, state actors and state sponsors, or any future terror threat.

Under the leadership of President Trump, our CT Strategy is one of action and strength. Through his CT Strategy, President Trump and his Administration will always put America first, defending its people and homeland from terrorists, and always make America more safe and secure.