

Background

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Building a Global Freedom Coalition with a New “Security for Freedom Fund”

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The United States and other free nations face a range of security challenges that many of the existing international organizations and alliances are ill suited to meet. Too many of these organizations were designed for an era that has long passed. To counter 21st-century threats—from aggressive rogue states, despots, terrorists, and international criminals—the United States and its partners should fashion new arrangements that promote security and protect liberty.

What is urgently needed is a new, more flexible association of free nations around the world—a Global Freedom Coalition (GFC)—whose members have both the will and the means to defeat threats to their security and also the desire to promote the kind of stability in which freedom can flourish. It should not be bound by geography, as many small nations in every region of the world have already demonstrated their commitment to fighting the war on terrorism, interdicting the illicit proliferation of nuclear weapons technology, and increasing law enforcement and intelligence capabilities to stem human trafficking and international narcotics and crime networks. To help develop such a coalition, the United States should take the lead and create a new fund to provide emerging democracies with the resources they need to build their military and institutional capabilities.¹

Unlike some other ideas for bringing nations together, such as the League of Democracies proposed by Senator John McCain (R-AZ), the criteria for membership in the GFC should not be whether or not a nation calls itself a democracy. Its members

Talking Points

- The United States and other free nations face a wide range of security threats that many of the existing international organizations are ill suited to meet. NATO is a Euro-centric alliance struggling to reshape itself. The U.N. has become the means by which America’s competitors and enemies collaborate to dilute U.S. influence and counter U.S. interests.
- To counter 21st-century threats, the U.S. should take the lead in fashioning new arrangements that promote security and protect liberty.
- What is needed is a more flexible association of free nations—a Global Freedom Coalition—whose members have both the will and the means to defeat threats to their security.
- To help other nations committed to liberty and security become meaningful members of such a coalition, the United States should establish a Security for Freedom Fund that revamps the entire U.S. foreign military assistance program so that America and its friends and allies around the world are better able to respond to unfolding security threats.

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must have demonstrated a commitment to expanding political and civil liberties and deepening the rule of law, and they must have contributed to regional and global security.

To help nations committed to liberty and security develop their capabilities to contribute to and join such a coalition, the Administration should establish a Security for Freedom Fund. America has many friends in the developing world that share American interests and values and that have helped the U.S. in Iraq and Afghanistan, but that may lack the capabilities at this time to meaningfully contribute to a new coalition. Current Foreign Military Sales (FMS) and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programs are insufficient, impeded by a tangle of restrictions and bureaucratic delays that often render U.S. security assistance tardy or ineffective. Creating a Security for Freedom Fund could be a vehicle by which the Administration revamps the entire U.S. foreign military assistance program so that America and its friends and allies around the world can respond to unfolding threats to their security in new, more flexible, and more creative ways than the current international system allows.

New Threats, Old Institutions

The threats facing the United States may have changed dramatically since the end of the Cold War, but the tools and institutions we use to confront them have not. Over the past two decades, issues such as nuclear proliferation, rogue states, and international terrorism have dominated the global security environment. At the same time, the rise of new regional powers such as Venezuela, India, and Pakistan, and the resurgence of assertive authoritarian regimes in Russia and China, have contributed to greater global insecurity.

What makes these developments more challenging is that our international alliances and partnerships created after World War II have failed to keep pace. The relationships that have long shaped U.S.

security policy are no longer adequate to cover the full range of challenges to global security and stability. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is a Euro-centric alliance under pressure to reshape itself in an increasingly global age. The United Nations has become the means by which our competitors and enemies collaborate to dilute U.S. influence and counter U.S. interests. Recent more successful security creations like the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) have yet to be integrated into a broader framework whose goal is to guarantee international stability and the protection of free institutions worldwide.

This gap between threats and capabilities has not escaped public attention. Both the Democratic and Republican presidential candidates expressed their support during the election campaign for some form of new institutionalized cooperation among the world's major democracies.²

While their proposals pointed out the need for the U.S. to forge new partnerships among the world's free nations, neither was fully satisfactory. Creating a League of Democracies that admits any nation that calls itself a democracy simply because it holds elections would suffer from the same cacophony of voices and interests that stymie global responses by the United Nations. Yet limiting membership to only fully mature democracies would be unwise as well; it would exclude such important states-in-transition as Singapore and the Philippines, which have demonstrated their commitment to common security through their participation in the PSI. Indeed, the difficulty for the Community of Democracies has been arriving at a common definition of what constitutes a democracy (witness its inclusion of indisputably authoritarian governments like Egypt and Belarus).

The world has changed significantly in the 60 years since many of our current security arrangements were established. We need new institutions

1. For more details on how a new Global Freedom Coalition should be created and what its objectives should be, see Kim R. Holmes, "Time for a New International Game Plan," Heritage Foundation *Backgrounder* No. 2231, January 22, 2009, at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/internationalorganizations/bg2231.cfm>.
2. John McCain, "An Enduring Peace Built on Freedom," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2007; Ivo Daalder and James Goldgeier, "Global NATO," *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2006; "Barack Obama's Remarks on Iraq and National Security," July 15, 2008, Council on Foreign Relations, at <http://www.cfr.org/publication/16791> (January 27, 2009).

and mechanisms to deal more effectively with evolving threats to international peace and security.

The Need for a New More Global Coalition

As Heritage Vice President for Foreign and Defense Policy Studies Kim R. Holmes explains,³ what America needs is not simply more influence in old institutions, but a new coalition that is neither a traditional military alliance nor a new international body with a new bureaucracy and a new budget. What America and the world need is a voluntary, less formal association of nations dedicated to pursuing freedom and security on a global scale. Such a group would complement the work of more formal alliances like NATO and the Rio Pact. Membership would be open to countries in every region that can fulfill a few principal requirements.

First, the country must show a consistent commitment to freedom—which means respect for such economic and political freedoms as property rights and free speech, as well as holding transparent elections. Emerging democracies that have demonstrated their commitment to the defense of freedom on the international level and are showing greater domestic liberalization should be given observer status.⁴ The country must be willing to work cooperatively with other member states to address major threats to international security and freedom.

Second, the country must have something meaningful to contribute (whether in the form of law enforcement cooperation, intelligence-sharing, diplomatic support, or military assets) to the activities and purposes of the Global Freedom Coalition. Such cooperative activities include responding to and defeating the most pressing threats to security through intelligence-sharing, economic and diplomatic cooperation, and combined military measures. It should include joint aid strategies and activities like election monitoring.

The ultimate goal should be a concert of nations

that, when necessary, can act as an additional check on aggression against free nations or emerging democracies, such as Russia's recent invasion of Georgia. In that episode, the U.S. deferred leadership on the crisis to the EU, specifically allowing Nicolas Sarkozy (since France held the EU presidency at the time) to act as lead negotiator in a ceasefire. Yet as Kim Holmes has pointed out, many Europeans do not consider Georgia part of Europe, and the EU itself often seems more interested in accommodating Russia, which supplies much of its energy, than in defending the sovereignty of a "far-away" country like Georgia. However, Holmes explains that,

If the GFC had existed with Georgia as a member, at the very least it could have put another negotiator into the mix. This negotiator might or might not have been the U.S., but if it were not, it would at least have been a country more in tune with U.S. and Georgian wishes and interests and not as fearful and beholden to Russia as the EU is. As a multilateral and global institution, it would have been a stronger voice for the geopolitically orphaned Georgia than either the EU or NATO was. At some point, the GFC could become strong enough to supplant the EU as surrogate negotiator on behalf of U.S. interests.⁵

NATO too has its constraints. A NATO-like Article V commitment—which considers an attack on one member an attack on all—would not be necessary or even advisable for the GFC since it is not intended to be a military alliance, in the sense that NATO represents a commitment to mutual defense, or to protect a particular geographic region. Indeed, an Article V-type commitment could create other problems, such as entangling the coalition in territorial or border disputes or precluding the participation of potentially valuable members like India and Pakistan. The GFC should

3. See Holmes, "Time for a New International Game Plan," and Kim R. Holmes, *Liberty's Best Hope: Why American Leadership Is Needed for the 21st Century* (Washington, D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 2008), pp. 98–122.
4. This is the successful formula that allowed Portugal and Greece to participate in NATO operations during the Cold War despite not being full democracies.
5. Holmes, "Time for a New International Game Plan."

be seen as a way to form a broader, more flexible framework for free nations to address global threats to security. To do this, it would need members from around the world, including but not limited to such longstanding partners of the United States as the U.K., New Zealand, Germany, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and other established allies in Europe and East Asia.

Members from the developing world should also be included for several reasons. Threats like terrorism and nuclear proliferation cannot be fully addressed by regional alliances. Major developing countries like Brazil and India are seeking to expand their sway in world affairs. Developing democracies like the Philippines have emerged as central fronts in the global war on terror and have been valuable contributors to the fight through their participation in the PSI and other initiatives.

Having a new forum that enables such nations to discuss security and liberty with the world's free and developed nations—without the baggage associated with other economic and political institutions—would greatly facilitate effective solutions to thorny international problems. Such a broad coalition would be well suited for bringing pressure on North Korea should the Six-Party Talks break down, and on Iran, which regularly invokes the solidarity of non-aligned and developing nations to deflect U.S. and European pressure. Finally, including developing nations will give these countries a powerful new incentive to continue along the path to political and economic freedom, much as the prospect of NATO membership encouraged countries like Poland, the Czech Republic, and Romania to lock in their post-Cold War democratic reforms.

Still, efforts to include prominent developing countries in the new coalition should not be undertaken hastily. Admitting countries before they can meaningfully contribute to its activities would risk diluting its effectiveness and credibility.

The Need for a “Security for Freedom Fund”

What America needs to help prospective members meet these requirements is a new funding mechanism for supporting programs that would improve their military and security capacities. This

idea is hardly a new one; America's permanent alliances have long rested on a foundation of U.S. military assistance. This approach is no less important for shaping an effective Global Freedom Coalition, especially with respect to including nations like Georgia, Iraq, Afghanistan, and others whose enthusiasm for security exceeds their current military capabilities. A fully effective GFC, in other words, cannot simply be assembled from ready-made parts; it must grow and be strengthened using military sales and assistance.

The United States' current Foreign Military Sales procedures are simply inadequate for this purpose. The FMS system is convoluted and its efforts often hindered by a maze of legislative and bureaucratic restrictions. Congressionally mandated wait-times, bureaucratic hurdles, excessive notification requirements, and unnecessary segmentation of the process can result in a delay of up to five years from the time a need is identified to when it is met.

These and other problems repeatedly compromise important U.S. security interests. Between 1998 and 2002, congressional legislation forbade the Colombian government from using the hundreds of millions of dollars of equipment provided under the aegis of Plan Colombia for counterinsurgency (as opposed to counternarcotics) purposes. This rule made little sense when the survival of Colombia's democracy was very much in doubt. It also proved extremely cumbersome to implement, given that the nation's insurgents were also the chief players in its illicit drug trade.

A more recent example of this phenomenon could be seen in the most critical FMS mission the United States currently faces: equipping the Iraqi security forces, an effort that got bogged down in a morass of legislative and bureaucratic requirements. Technology transfer requirements, congressional notification requirements, and the fact that no one step of the nine-step FMS procedure could go forward until the preceding step had been fully completed caused considerable delays in the delivery of crucial equipment to the coalition's Iraqi partners, and thereby impeded the hand-over of greater responsibility to those forces.

To make the GFC work, Washington will need to devise military-assistance policies that are better

aligned with U.S. national security needs and objectives. The proper mechanism for this challenge is a new Security for Freedom Fund that constitutes a major departure from existing FMS procedures. It should resemble the innovative approach used in the already-successful U.S. Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) program initiated in 2002.

The MCA consists of a pool of funds to be used for economic and development aid in developing countries. Access to that pool is granted after a rigorous process in which country applications are judged according to such criteria as adherence to basic standards of human rights and good governance, fiscal responsibility, and a commitment to the kinds of development projects that have a proven record of promoting economic growth.

The MCA is revolutionizing U.S. economic-assistance policies. By demanding that a country show its commitment to freedom and economic development, the MCA has greatly improved the likelihood that its aid is not squandered on wasteful and unproductive projects. By placing emphasis on good governance and democratic norms, the MCA has lessened the potential for U.S. foreign aid to be used to prop up authoritarian regimes and increased the likelihood it will go to programs that help people on the ground.

The new Security for Freedom Fund should apply the basic MCA model (though not all the particulars of that program) to security-assistance grants. As is the case with the MCA, the Security for Freedom Fund should dedicate its resources to financing foreign military sales that fulfill specific criteria. For example, countries that qualify could request a certain sum of money to finance the purchase of specific U.S. military equipment.

Judging applications for the Security for Freedom Fund grants should be done by an interagency committee that is composed of representatives from the Departments of Defense, State, and Homeland Security. Assistance should be awarded according to how applicants have met four principal criteria:

- **A demonstrated commitment to freedom and human rights.** Does the country hold regular

and transparent elections? Does it have a record of upholding basic political and economic freedoms as measured by the *Index of Economic Freedom* and Freedom House?

- **A commitment to the rule of law and governance.** Does the government have a record of promoting fundamental freedoms abroad? Does it observe its international agreements? Is there civilian control of the armed forces?
- **Mutual bilateral security interests with the U.S. and its allies.** Is the country concerned about the same threats that menace the United States and the other members of the GFC? By promoting the applicant nation's security, will the U.S. also promote its own?
- **A demonstrated need for U.S. military assistance.** Is the assistance requested appropriate to the threats that country faces? Is capacity building in its military forces and civilian security institutions necessary to make that nation a productive member of the GFC? Does the country have any arrangements with countries to which the U.S. restricts military sales?

Countries meeting these criteria could be awarded Security for Freedom Fund grants to purchase U.S. military equipment. In recognition that security issues often cross the lines between law enforcement and military activities, or between counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, the country should be able to use the equipment as it deems necessary to meet its specific security needs.

The Security for Freedom Fund would supplement the Foreign Military Financing, the U.S. program that provides military assistance to foreign governments, in much the same way that the MCA supplements longstanding U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) programs. The MCA did not replace USAID, but supplemented its aid so that the process targeted aid more precisely to core U.S. goals. The Security for Freedom Fund should function much the same way. There are countries that will not meet the Security for Freedom Fund requirements to which the U.S. will still want to provide assistance, and the current structure should still be available for those purposes.

Though there is always a risk that U.S. military assistance may be put to a use contrary to U.S. interests, the Security for Freedom Fund is not likely to increase that probability. For one thing, any country accepted for grants will have gone through an extremely rigorous vetting process. That process will involve close scrutiny of its record on human rights, democracy, and security, and provide greater assurance that U.S. military assistance reaches only those countries whose values and interests are closely aligned with those of the United States.

In the same vein, a Security for Freedom Fund should not entail open-ended commitments to financing military sales to successful applicants. A country's access to the fund should be reviewed on a regular basis, in order to ensure that the United States has the continuing ability to monitor the performance of recipient countries.

All told, the Security for Freedom Fund offers the United States several important benefits:

1. It would streamline and rationalize the FMS process significantly. By condensing the current procedures into a single application process, it would shorten delivery times and allow recipients to use U.S. military assistance when they need it, not years later.
2. By giving these countries the capability to use U.S. military assistance for a range of security issues, the fund would eliminate the kind of onerous and counterproductive restrictions that Colombia and other countries have experienced. In short, the fund would facilitate the efforts of U.S. allies to protect themselves and their shared interests, which ultimately redounds to the benefit of the United States.
3. By creating an interagency mechanism governing access to all U.S. military assistance, the Security for Freedom Fund would ensure that the full spectrum of national security concerns—diplomatic, military, and homeland defense—are integrated into the process. The need for this is especially pressing with respect to the Department of Homeland Security, which currently lacks an outreach capacity that would

allow it to coordinate with foreign militaries on issues crucial to U.S. domestic security.

4. The fund would allow the Administration to target U.S. military assistance so that it best promotes democracy and freedom worldwide. This would ensure that U.S. funds are being used to strengthen governments committed to these values, while at the same time providing an incentive for other countries that want U.S. aid to take steps toward greater domestic liberalization. The fund would help build the security capacity of such friends and allies, which would promote the broader aims of U.S. foreign policy and the Global Freedom Coalition.

Conclusion

Changing times often require changing tools, and in today's world, the United States must be able to adjust its national security policies to respond to rapidly changing threats. A Global Freedom Coalition would offer the prospect of broader, more effective global cooperation on issues ranging from global terrorism, aggressive autocracies, and international crime to the protection of democratic institutions.

A GFC will not take shape overnight, nor will it be fully effective without a U.S. commitment to help other nations build their own military and security capacities to contribute to global security. Creating a Security for Freedom Fund would help make U.S. military assistance more effective and efficient so that those who share America's values can better confront the range of security issues they also face. A Security for Freedom Fund will ensure that U.S. military aid goes hand in hand with America's abiding desire to strengthen free institutions and promote liberty worldwide.

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