



FACT SHEET: Record of Strengthening America's National Security

- 1. Osama bin Laden brought to justice.** With Senate Democrats' support, President Obama made finding and killing bin Laden a top priority for U.S. national security and executed a focused, sustained effort that succeeded in killing the world's most wanted terrorist.
- 2. Successfully degrading Al Qaeda.** Under President Obama's leadership and with the support of Senate Democrats, the Armed Forces and Intelligence Community has decimated Al Qaeda's leadership ranks, capturing and killing many top-level operatives and preventing terrorist plots.
 - Numerous top-ranking al Qaeda leaders have been removed from the battlefield including Osama bin Laden, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) leader Anwar al-Aulaqi, senior al Qaeda-leaders like Atiya Abdul Rahman and Abu Yahya al-Libi, and senior Haqqani Network terrorist Badruddin Haqqani. [[State Department](#), 7/31/12; [ABC News](#), 6/5/12; [USA Today](#), 8/26/12]
 - According to the State Department, "The loss of bin Ladin and these other key operatives puts the network on a path of decline that will be difficult to reverse." [[State Department](#), 7/31/12]
- 3. Expanding Special Forces' role in combating terrorism.** By dramatically increasing resources for Special Operations Forces, Senate Democrats and President Obama have directed a major expansion of their role in Afghanistan, making a vital difference in combating terrorism and restricting Al Qaeda's ability to operate.
- 4. Helping to topple Qaddafi's terrorist regime in Libya.** Muammar Qaddafi and his regime were known sponsors of terrorism, including repeated terrorist attacks that claimed American lives. President Obama worked in concert with our allies to lead a robust, multilateral coalition to prevent a large-scale massacre in Libya. With Libya's brutal dictator gone, Libyans are working to build democratic institutions and conduct historic elections as they continue their transition to democracy.
- 5. Transitioning Afghanistan to Afghan control.** President Obama worked with Senate Democrats to devise a new strategy for Afghanistan that will shift security responsibility to Afghans by the end of 2014 and allow U.S. combat troops to return home.
- 6. Bringing terrorists to justice.** Senate Democrats have fought hard to preserve and strengthen all of the government's tools for bringing terrorists to justice, including maintaining the civilian court option in terrorism trials. The federal prosecution system boasts an 87% conviction rate in terrorism cases and exacts more stringent sentences on those found guilty. In October 2011, Senate Democrats defeated a Republican measure that would have compromised our ability to remove terrorists from the battlefield by prohibiting the use of Justice Department funds for civilian trials of terrorism suspects.

7. **Responsibly ending our combat mission in Iraq.** Democrats put an end to years of strategic drift by refocusing on core national security priorities, enabling our troops to come home after nine long years of war.
8. **Confronting Iran's nuclear weapons ambitions.** Under Democratic leadership, the Senate has joined the Obama Administration in putting in place tough and comprehensive sanctions with the goal of stopping Iran's nuclear weapons program.
9. **Improving military readiness by ending "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."** President Obama and Senate Democrats repealed the discriminatory policy of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," enabling all members of the Armed Forces to serve openly and without fear of prosecution.
10. **Securing and reducing nuclear weapons.** Senate Democrats secured passage of the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START). This significant agreement limited the number of strategic nuclear weapons possessed by the U.S. and Russia, while preserving a strong U.S. nuclear arsenal as an effective strategic deterrent. The New START Treaty provides stability, predictability and transparency between the two largest nuclear powers.

National security experts on Al-Qaeda defeats

- The U.S. is "within reach of strategically defeating al Qaeda."
– Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta [[The New York Times](#), 7/9/11]
- "In short, al-Qaida is losing badly...In recent years, with the help of targeted strikes, we have turned al-Qaida into a shadow of what it once was. They are on the road to destruction."
– Chief counterterrorism advisor to President Obama John Brennan. [[Speech](#), 4/30/12]
- "In short, the intelligence picture shows that al-Qa'ida core is a shadow of its former self, and the overall threat from al-Qa'ida in Pakistan is diminished."
– Director of the National Counterterrorism Center Matthew Olson [[HHSC testimony](#), 5/25/12]
- "[T]here is a better-than-even chance that decentralization will lead to fragmentation of [al Qaeda] within a few years."
– Director of National Intelligence James Clapper [[SSCI testimony](#), 1/31/12]
- "They're struggling for relevance."
– Former State Department Assistant Secretary P.J. Crowley [[The Aspen Times](#), 7/27/12]
- "The organization, especially the central core, has been decimated."
– Al Qaeda expert Brian Fishman from the New America Foundation [[National Security Network](#), 5/8/12]
- "The architects of 9/11 have been captured or killed. Al Qaeda's founder and titular leader is dead. Its remaining leadership has been decimated."
– Brian Michael Jenkins from The RAND Corporation [[RAND](#), 2012]