

Issue: American Legion Statement of U.S. Foreign Policy Objectives

Message Points:

- We believe US foreign policy should embody the following 12 principles as outlined in Resolution “Principles of US Foreign Policy.” These Policies are:
 1. Recognition that the US has great and multiple responsibilities as a leader of the Free World;
 2. Dedication to achievement of world peace with freedom, secured by a peace through strength posture;
 3. Support for a global fight on multiple fronts to end the scourge of terrorism;
 4. Support for democracy and human rights in other countries when such is consistent with US national interests and national power;
 5. Participation in essential collective security alliances, provided our allies contribute their fair share;
 6. Negotiation of equitable, verifiable arms control agreements, which improve US national security;
 7. Opposition to the spread of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons or long-range ballistic missiles which may be used by terrorists, terrorist organizations, communists or aggressor nations;
 8. Determined opposition to international terrorism and drug trafficking;
 9. Support for responsible international organizations that are consistent with US sovereignty and serve US national interests;
 10. Participation in an increasingly interdependent Free World trading system based on fair and equitable trading practices;
 11. Recognition that the President must be the chief architect of US foreign policy as envisioned in the US Constitution, while Congress performs important functions of advice, oversight and funding;
 12. Support for the appropriate resources to promote and protect US vital national interests world-wide.

Issue: Terrorism

- The American Legion fully supports the President of the United States, the United States Congress and the men, women and leadership of our armed forces as they are engaged in the Global War on Terrorism; and urges all Americans and freedom-loving peoples everywhere to stand united in their support of the global war on terrorism, and united in their support of the troops who are engaged in protecting our values and way of life. The American Legion will continue to support all efforts to defeat our enemies in the Global War on Terror.

- We believe that a nation state which fails to adequately provide for its people creates an opportunity for extremists and terrorists to flourish and grow. The American Legion supports legislation and foreign policy that specifically targets diplomatic, economic and educational programs to promote greater and peaceful democratic reforms in countries prone to extremist ideologies and extremist groups that employ terrorism.

- We need to note that Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Admiral Michael Mullen have stated in their 2008 posture statements before Congress as an imperative from experience in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom is that the US Government needs to rapidly develop its interagency expeditionary power and that the military has been expected to do too much in the realm of nation building thus far during the Global War on Terror. These leaders urge the development of the interagency capabilities other than military power to bring all aspects of our national power to bear in this current era of prolonged conflict anticipated in the fight of the Global War on Terror.

Issue: American Legion POW/MIA Policy

Message points:

- The POW/MIA issue is of paramount concern to The American Legion. The Legion's mandate on this issue commits us to keep the spotlight on securing the full accounting for all POW/MIAs from the Gulf War, the war in Southeast Asia, the Cold War, the Korean War and World War II. Full accounting means the return of live POWs, the repatriation of their remains, or convincing evidence why neither of these is possible.
- With regard to Vietnam in particular, The American Legion has always believed that the Vietnamese have the knowledge and the capability to account for the fate of many more of our POW/MIAs from the War in Southeast Asia. Moreover, only Vietnam, by taking unilateral actions to repatriate remains and to provide relevant information from wartime records, documents and the oral history program, can help account for many still missing Americans.
- The American Legion continues to oppose the normalization of diplomatic relations with Vietnam. We remain unconvinced that Vietnam is cooperating in full faith on POW/MIA issues. We are also concerned about the poor state of human rights in Vietnam, especially for ethnic groups such as the Montagnards that were American allies during the war.
- The American Legion supports the continued declassification of all POW/MIA information, the strengthening of joint commissions with Russia, North Korea and China, and adequate resourcing of investigative efforts and field operations to resolve POW/MIA issues. The American Legion has also worked continuously with both Congress and the Defense Department to improve the policies and programs for the accountability of missing persons. For years The American Legion supported a National POW/MIA Recognition Day, which is now recognized annually on the third Friday in September.
- The American Legion will continue to cooperate with the War Veterans Committee of the Commonwealth of Independent States, also known as the countries of the former Soviet Union, in accordance with Resolution "War

Veterans Committee” with the aim of uncovering facts and obtaining answers regarding POWs/MIAs of both sides.

- The American Legion will continue to speak out and exert maximum pressure on both the Administration and on the Congress to fully account for America’s POW/MIAs.

Issue: Support for the U.S. Department of State

Message points:

- The American Legion is a strong supporter of the U.S. State Department and the various functions it performs for the American public overseas. The United States Department of State is the first line of defense of the nation in combating the myriad of security threats that face America from abroad. The State Department and its affiliated organizations are charged with a number of important missions; managing diplomatic coalitions with other countries and international institutions, promoting peace and stability in regions of vital interest, bringing nations together to address global challenges, creating jobs at home by opening markets abroad, and helping developing nations establish stable economic environments that provide investment and export opportunities.
- The State Department has historically been allocated just little more than 1% of the total federal budget to accomplish all of these tasks in contrast to the approximately 16% spent on defense. However, in recent years the State Department's responsibilities have expanded enormously to include combating threats from terrorism, international crime, and narcotics trafficking.
- The American Legion vigorously supports funding for the United States Department of State in order that it can maintain a credible initial deterrent to international threats to the United States and effectively promote American interests abroad.

Issue: Other Select Foreign Relations issues

The United Nations

- The American Legion remains supportive of the United Nations from its inception however; ongoing reforms must make the UN more effective. In addition, we are concerned with certain UN policies that affect the US directly. An equitable fiduciary relationship between the UN and the US, UN programs or policies do not infringe upon ensuring US sovereignty. And the ineffectiveness of recent UN peacekeeping missions due to the lack of coherent force engagement policies.

The War on Drugs

- The American Legion is extremely concerned about the destruction caused by the infusion of illegal drugs into our communities. Realizing that much can be done to reduce demand here at home, we also support robust efforts to stem the production and flow of illegal drugs from their source and transit zones in Latin America and in Afghanistan.

Taiwan (Republic of China)

- The American Legion has vigorously supported Taiwan and its right to self-determination since 1949. Since that time we have also supported the sale of armaments to Taiwan so they can maintain a credible self-defense capability.

Human Rights in Vietnam

- The American Legion supports Congressional legislation that would highlight the human rights situation in Vietnam and seek to compel the Socialist Republic of Vietnam to improve the treatment of ethnic and religious minorities, especially in the Central Highlands, in order that they can enjoy the basic freedoms that all humans deserve.

Cuba and Latin America

- The American Legion urges the US Government to continue to maintain control of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, continue intelligence over flights over Cuba, remain firm in opposition to export of revolution by Cuba, continue broadcasting true news and information to the Cuban people, and encourage the development of democracy and a free market economy in Cuba.
- The American Legion urges Congress and the Secretary of Defense to ensure that the Western Hemisphere Institute for Security Cooperation (WHINSEC) is adequately funded on the basis that hemispheric training, alliance building, and the sharing of knowledge among the Organization of American States is a vital interest to the US in terms of the establishment of alliances, hemispheric cooperation and national security. American Legion representatives personally visited WHINSEC in June 2008 and observed ethics and human rights courses being conducted and met with students from South and Central America who expressed appreciation for the training in American alliances, cooperation, democracy, living in free societies and traditional American values.

Africa

- The American Legion supports The US military new Africa Command (AFRICOM), which will offer aid and military training and increase our political and diplomatic presence in a region long overdue our attention.