



**The United States  
National Security  
Council**

*National  
Strategy for  
Victory in Iraq*

**The United States National Security Council**

# **National Strategy for Victory in Iraq**



Published by Good Press, 2022

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EAN 4064066456405

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# Executive Summary

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### Victory in Iraq is Defined in Stages

- **Short term**, Iraq is making steady progress in fighting terrorists, meeting political milestones, building democratic institutions, and standing up security forces.
- **Medium term**, Iraq is in the lead defeating terrorists and providing its own security, with a fully constitutional government in place, and on its way to achieving its economic potential.
- **Longer term**, Iraq is peaceful, united, stable, and secure, well integrated into the international community, and a full partner in the global war on terrorism.

### Victory in Iraq is a Vital U.S. Interest

- Iraq is the central front in the global war on terror. Failure in Iraq will embolden terrorists and expand their reach; success in Iraq will deal them a decisive and crippling blow.
- The fate of the greater Middle East—which will have a profound and lasting impact on American security—hangs in the balance.

### Failure is Not an Option

- Iraq would become a safe haven from which terrorists could plan attacks against America, American interests abroad, and our allies.
- Middle East reformers would never again fully trust American assurances of support for democracy and human rights in the region—a historic opportunity lost.
- The resultant tribal and sectarian chaos would have major consequences for American security and interests in the region.

### The Enemy Is Diffuse and Sophisticated

- The enemy is a combination of rejectionists, Saddamists, and terrorists affiliated with or inspired by Al Qaida. Distinct but integrated strategies are required to defeat each element.
- Each element shares a common short-term objective—to intimidate, terrorize, and tear down—but has separate and incompatible long-term goals.
- Exploiting these differences within the enemy is a key element of our strategy.

### Our Strategy for Victory is Clear

- We will help the Iraqi people build a new Iraq with a constitutional, representative government that respects civil rights and has security forces sufficient to maintain domestic order and keep Iraq from becoming a safe haven for terrorists. To achieve this end, we are pursuing an integrated strategy along three broad tracks, which together incorporate the