

Violence is up dramatically in Afghanistan. A deadly insurgency has taken deep root. The opium trade is far and away the largest in the world. The Afghan Government has been unable to deliver basic services. Al Qaida and the Taliban strike from bases embedded in rugged, tribal terrain along the Pakistani border. And while we have yet to see another attack on our soil since 9/11, Al Qaida terrorists remain at large and remain plotting.

Going forward, we must set clear priorities in pursuit of achievable goals that contribute to our collective security. My administration is committed to refocusing attention and resources on Afghanistan and Pakistan and to spending those resources wisely. And that's why we are pursuing a careful review of our policy. We will seek stronger partnerships with the governments of the region, sustained cooperation with our NATO allies, deeper engagement with the Afghan and Pakistani people, and a comprehensive strategy to combat terror and extremism. We will provide the strategic guidance to meet our objectives. And we pledge to support the extraordinary Americans serving in Afghanistan, both military and civilian, with the resources that they need.

These appointments add to a team that will work with energy and purpose to meet the challenges of our time and to define a future of expanding security and opportunity. Difficult days lie ahead. As we ask more of ourselves, we will seek new partnerships and ask more of our

friends, and more of people around the globe, because security in the 21st century is shared. But let there be no doubt about America's commitment to lead. We can no longer afford drift, and we can no longer afford delay. Nor can we cede ground to those who seek destruction. A new era of American leadership is at hand, and the hard work has just begun.

You are going to be at the frontlines of engaging in that important work. And I am absolutely confident that with the leadership of Secretary Clinton, with wonderful envoys like Richard Holbrooke and George Mitchell, with the dedicated team that is before me today, that we are going to be able to accomplish our objectives, keep America safe, and bring better days not just to our own country, but all around the world.

Thank you very much, everyone.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who introduced the President; Vice President Joe Biden; President Mohamed Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and President Mahmoud Abbas and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority. He also referred to Executive Order 13491, Ensuring Lawful Interrogations; Executive Order 13492, Review and Disposition of Individuals Detained at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Closure of Detention Facilities; and Executive Order 13493, Review of Detention Policy Options.

Statement on the 36th Anniversary of *Roe v. Wade* January 22, 2009

On the 36th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*, we are reminded that this decision not only protects women's health and reproductive freedom, but stands for a broader principle that Government should not intrude on our most private family matters. I remain committed to protecting a woman's right to choose.

While this is a sensitive and often divisive issue, no matter what our views, we are united in our determination to prevent unintended pregnancies, reduce the need for abortion, and support women and families in the choices they make. To accomplish these goals, we must work

to find common ground to expand access to affordable contraception, accurate health information, and preventative services.

On this anniversary, we must also recommit ourselves more broadly to ensuring that our daughters have the same rights and opportunities as our sons: the chance to attain a world-class education; to have fulfilling careers in any industry; to be treated fairly and paid equally for their work; and to have no limits on their dreams. That is what I want for women everywhere.