

Today, the Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs will conduct the first in a series of hearings into long-term U.S. national security strategy six years after 9/11.

Even with the amazing amount of money and energy expended – and more importantly lives lost – so far on military engagements, homeland security and intelligence since September 11, 2001, there remains an inescapable sense that ours is a national security policy adrift;

in a policy adrift in a sea of rising extremism and gathering terrorist storm clouds, whether from al Qaeda's resurgence in Pakistan or from anti-American attitudes around the globe.

in a policy adrift because – more than six years after September 11 – we have still yet to develop a bipartisan consensus on a comprehensive, long-term strategy to combat this grave threat or to put it in the context of other U.S. strategic interests.

In the words of one of our panelists today, we have yet to act with the “burst of creativity” that was the trademark of the United States at the beginning of the Cold War.

While there have been studies commissioned (including the excellent work by the 9/11 Commission), analyses offered and strategies published, the hard work of formulating, forging and implementing a bipartisan national security strategy remains lacking. Many feel that we haven't even yet had a robust, bipartisan dialogue, one in which the American people are fully engaged.

That is what this series of hearings is about.

As we proceed, I encourage other Members – from both sides of the aisle – to share your own ideas for future witnesses. We want to hear from top experts and those with real-world experiences and innovative, “creative” ideas.

Our three witnesses today hit the mark on all fronts, and I expect a robust discussion. With that in mind, I wish to only lay out a few questions.

For instance, what is the nature of the threat we face? Where does that threat fit into other strategic national interests, such as nonproliferation efforts or relations with Russia and China? What role should the public have in formulating this bipartisan strategy, and what sacrifices will they be asked to make? What role should our allies and international institutions play?

Also, what is the right mix of military power versus other tools at our disposal? The 9/11 Commission concluded, and I quote: “long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy; foreign aid, public diplomacy and homeland defense.”

Six years after 9/11, are we achieving the right mix? One expert concluded that the United States is spending 400 times more on hard, coercive power than we do on our soft power to attract. Is this the winning formula?

Finally, what’s the proper standard for evaluating U.S. performance?

The 9/11 Commission noted, and I quote: “our strategy must match our means to two ends: dismantling the al Qaeda network and prevailing in the longer term over the ideology that gives rise to Islamist terrorism.”

Former Secretary Rumsfeld put it this way: “Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?”

While stretched thin by ongoing engagements, no one questions U.S. military capability and courage to reach and destroy identified targets. But, how are we doing in this broader ideological battle:

- An August 2007 Pew poll found 68% of Pakistanis hold an unfavorable view of the U.S. – up 12% since 2006. In a separate poll, only 4% found any positive motivation whatsoever in the U.S. led war on terror.

- 76% of Moroccans have an unfavorable view of the current U.S. government. 93% of Egyptians share that view – a country that benefits from massive amounts of U.S. aid.

- 64% of people in Turkey – a key NATO ally – believe the U.S. poses their greatest foreign policy threat, and a whopping 83% have an unfavorable opinion of the U.S. – up 29% since 2002.