

Year in Review

The Department of Defense is leading the global war on terror. The courageous men and women in uniform and the Department civilians who support them have accomplished tremendous feats since our country was attacked 3 years ago. They have:

- Overthrown two terrorist regimes, rescued two nations, and liberated some 50 million people;
- Hunted down thousands of terrorists and regime remnants in Iraq and Afghanistan;
- Ensured a safe environment for the first election in Afghanistan's 5,000 year history;
- Disrupted terrorist cells on several continents; and
- Likely prevented a number of planned terrorist attacks.

To continue these great accomplishments, the Department is providing these brave men and women the tools they need to win the global war on terror, transforming for the 21st century, and ensuring the Department manages the force properly. DoD's commitment to our men and women in uniform means they will have the training and tools necessary to prevail in wars our nation may have to fight—wars which could be notably different from today's challenges. This commitment extends to attracting and retaining the best and the brightest, thereby sustaining the quality of the all-volunteer force.

When this Administration took office, the President charged the Department of Defense with a mission—to challenge the status quo, and prepare the Department to meet the new threats our nation will face as the 21st century unfolds.



Marines of the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit meet and greet Iraqi citizens. Marines patrolled the Iraqi neighborhoods, delivered water to residents who needed it and helped out the community as much as they could.

The Marines, escorted by a Light Armored Vehicle from Alpha Company, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, drove throughout their area of responsibility, stopping to offer residents water and to talk to them about their living conditions and how the Marines could help them. The day's activities are an important part of the Marines' security and stabilization mission in Iraq.

We have done a good deal to meet that charge, but our challenge is to build on these successes, and continue the transformation efforts that are now underway. In 2004, we:

- Continued to successfully prosecute the global war on terror;
- Further strengthened our combined and joint war fighting capabilities;
- Continued transforming the joint force, making it lighter, more agile and more easily deployable, and instilling a culture that rewards innovation and intelligent risk-taking;
- Strengthened our intelligence capabilities, and refocused our intelligence efforts to support the new defense strategy and our contingency plans;
- Began deploying the technologies necessary to protect our people from the deadly threat of ballistic missiles;
- Improved our management of the force;
- Taken critical steps to attract and retain talent in our Armed Forces—including targeted pay raises and quality of life improvements for the troops and their families;
- Refocused our overseas presence, further strengthening key alliances, and improving our security cooperation with nations that are likely partners in future contingencies;
- Worked with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in an effort to make the Alliance more relevant and credible in this post-Cold War era;
- Continued to improve and refine DoD's role in homeland security and homeland defense; and
- Further streamlined DoD processes by continuing financial management reform and shortening acquisition cycle times.

While successfully leading the global war on terror, the Department has also served the public around the world through various disaster relief and humanitarian missions, and other support to civil authorities.



Airmen with the 437th Airlift Squadron, Charleston Air Force Base, S.C., load relief supplies for victims of Hurricane Charley in Florida aboard a C-17 Globemaster III at Dobbins Air Reserve Base, Ga., on Aug. 14, 2004. The 437th was deployed in support of relief operations being conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. (DoD photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron D. Allmon II, U.S. Air Force.)

We can continue to live as free people because the industriousness and ingenuity of the American people have provided the resources to build the most powerful and capable Armed Forces in human history, and because we have been blessed with the finest young men and women in uniform—volunteers all—that the world has known.

They are courageous, they are selfless, and they are determined. We are grateful to them and proud of them.

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