

# **FOREIGN POLICY**

Texas Democrats believe peace, prosperity, and national security are assured by maintaining a strong national defense, promoting democracy, and advancing development abroad. Military action should be used only as a last resort, authorized only as allowed by our Constitution. We support consistent diplomacy and development efforts abroad in coordination with our allies. We believe the most important element in our military is the individual service member, and it is absolutely critical that we keep faith with those who serve and defend us.

## **Security and Development**

Texas Democrats believe that protecting our national security requires maintaining robust military capabilities and strong alliances, while also addressing the sources of security risks that stem from state weakness, poverty, corruption, and social breakdown abroad. Therefore we believe America must:

- prioritize working with allies whose values promote freedom and justice;
- maintain and improve the capacity of our military and diplomatic organizations to meet the threats from non-state groups and those nations that provide them support and protection;
- work closely with allies and lead international efforts to prevent the further spread of nuclear arms and to eliminate weapons of mass destruction;
- support our government's efforts to obtain the assistance of the countries in the Middle East in helping to stabilize the region;

- encourage Iraq to ensure security within its borders by renouncing sectarian violence and promoting a responsive and inclusive democracy that ensures minority rights and equitable access to resources;
- oppose the regime-sponsored violence occurring in Syria by expanding assistance to vetted opposition groups, expanding humanitarian aid, leading efforts to facilitate a negotiated political solution within Syria, leveraging alliances in the region to constrict the flow of resources to radical groups, and leading regional efforts to counter the crisis emanating from Syria;
- continue to support development of Afghanistan's civil and economic infrastructure through sustained support for economic development, governance capacity, and corruption reduction;
- minimize civilian casualties to the maximum extent possible consistent with the safety of our troops in Afghanistan and elsewhere;
- withdraw U.S. troop support from Afghanistan as rapidly as possible, consistent with their safety and in a manner that does not destabilize the region and place more lives in danger;
- maintain our long-standing policy that a true, mutually respectful peace with safe and secure borders for two states dedicated to peace and democracy – a Jewish homeland in Israel and a Palestinian homeland – can only result from direct negotiations between willing and responsible partners;
- work to ensure that new governments and societies become true democracies that promote responsive governance, ethnic and religious minority rights, individual freedoms, and economic opportunity;
- support the passage of the Global Respect Act, the International Human Rights Defense Act, and revising the World Bank's Safeguard Policy.
- work with our allies to assure safe haven for the millions of refugees fleeing conflict and persecution, to welcome these vulnerable people in the United States when properly vetted to maintain our national security, and to assist in their eventual safe return home;
- withdraw support for agencies and programs that promote hatred and intolerance;
- develop a new strategic approach to fragile states that prioritizes prevention, aligns policies across U.S. agencies, and leverages the full range of U.S. diplomacy, defense, development, and democratic engagement tools;
- make every reasonable effort to utilize our considerable military, economic, diplomatic, and technological capabilities to assist victims of natural disasters worldwide;
- secure our information and telecommunications technology infrastructure from cyber piracy and attack by supporting cooperation across public and private sector agencies, supporting development of a unified national cyber strategy, and ensuring critical infrastructure meets baseline security standards;
- assist economic development of our allies, particularly neighbors where high unemployment creates immigration pressures;
- continue the President's leadership in reducing U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, promoting clean energy, and mitigating the effects of global climate change;
- adopt policies that advance our national security by freeing us from dependence on the resource of any nation or region, including foreign oil;
- work with the African Union and the UN to bring stability to the continent by defeating terrorist organizations such as Boko Haram, Al Shabab, and other Central African terror groups;

- encourage universities and colleges to participate in foreign exchange programs and conduct joint research projects with foreign institutions; and
- remove legal barriers that prevent highly skilled foreign nationals educated in U.S. universities from continuing to work and live in the United States.

## **Trade Policy**

Texas Democrats believe that our foreign policy must also enhance the economic and employment conditions of American workers and restore our balance of trade. Therefore, American policies must:

- encourage the sale of domestic products and services in foreign markets and oppose foreign practices that effectively restrict access to markets for American businesses;
- support a fundamental rethink of how we approach trade agreements, because we support the strengthening of labor and human rights protections and stronger health, environmental, and consumer safety standards in future agreements. NAFTA-style trade agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership - which have led to massive U.S. job losses, sweatshop conditions and human rights abuses in developing countries, and environmental degradation - must be opposed;
- protect American companies from intellectual property theft, especially from state sponsored companies, and file lawsuits through the World Trade Organization when theft occurs; and
- protest through the World Trade Organization when countries artificially manipulate their currency to maintain trade imbalances.

## **National Security**

Texas Democrats believe that our national security is advanced by legitimate conduct, strong international leadership, and sustained international engagement. Therefore, American policies should:

- support the continued ban on the use of all methods of torture, including waterboarding, indefinite detention of persons without charges or legal representation, and other policies that violate or conflict with the values embodied by the Bill of Rights and the U.S. Constitution;
- support the immediate closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and set up a special court to hear the cases for detainees;
- establish legal oversight over all privatized military security forces, because military security contractors operating without government oversight have put America at risk;
- focus on practical, nonviolent solutions to the problems of domestic and international conflict;
- support the mission and efforts of the United States Peace Corps;
- fund an air traffic control system, essential to national security, that is fully equipped and staffed by public employees;
- strengthen port security, including inspection of currently unchecked containers; and
- support the repeal of the detention bed quota, as it targets indigenous peoples and undermines domestic and national security.