



# AMERICA'S PURPOSE

21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
PRINCIPLES TO  
REVITALIZE  
THE AMERICAN  
IDENTITY

To ensure a safer, stronger United States and a more stable and secure world, Americans must renew their sense of identity, pursue a common purpose and expand international collaboration to promote peace and opportunity. The United States alone possesses the ability to undergird a global system that protects the innocent from man-made terror and natural disasters. By committing to America's Purpose, the United States will better ensure a safe and prosperous future for its citizens.

Since the end of the Cold War, the United States seems to have lost the centering mechanism that unified the nation. Without a clearly identifiable foe—the Soviet Union—the United States is facing a global landscape of foggy uncertainty, with occasional outbursts of destabilizing violence and dangerous regional instability. The rise of the information age and globalization has triggered an explosion of ideas, often transmitted without filters or discernment, empowering state and non-state actors to challenge the previously established world order and threaten the American way of life.

In 1941, President Franklin D. Roosevelt led the nation to war by persuading the American people that Germany, Italy and Japan threatened their basic freedoms: the freedom from fear and want and of speech and religion. Roosevelt's 1941 State of the Union address and the Atlantic Charter, created in partnership with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, inspired America as it entered World War II and assumed its leadership role. Roosevelt's vision laid the foundation for the postwar order that guided American policy through the Cold War.

It should not take a war for the United States to revitalize its sense of purpose and once again embrace its role as a world leader. The president of the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) assembled a team of career diplomats, academics, pundits, political campaign planners and former civilian and military leaders to address America's blurred sense of identity. The group created *America's Purpose*—a set of principles to proactively galvanize a renewed sense of American national identity and to modernize the global framework to which the United States is committed.

When America unites, its people win and the world is safer. *America's Purpose* provides a unifying framework to overcome domestic and foreign challenges, resulting in a safer, stronger America and a more stable and secure world.



#### FREEDOM FROM FEAR AND WANT



#### FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND RELIGION



# AMERICA'S PURPOSE



**WE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES** envision an America that is safe, strong and secure. For every citizen to have the opportunity to reach his or her potential, we—all Americans together—must achieve our full potential as a nation. With the rise of globalization, oceans and borders shared with strong partners are no longer adequate to ensure the American way of life. Therefore, in the pursuit of peace, Americans find it fitting to foster a safe, secure, stable and prosperous future by committing to the following aspirations:

**American Safety and Security**—WE ARE COMMITTED to promoting a world at peace, wherein the people of the United States are safe from scourges of terrorism, interstate conflict, epidemic disease, poverty, atrocity and involuntary displacement. We are devoted to balancing the right to privacy with the requirements to protect people from these dangers.

**American Freedom**—WE ARE COMMITTED to protecting freedom, equality and fair treatment for Americans and advancing freedoms and human rights for all people—from freedom of speech and religion to freedom from terror and oppression—so that the rights of life and liberty for every individual are honored.

**American Opportunity**—WE ARE COMMITTED to ensuring that every individual is free to aspire to achieve his or her goals by promoting access to education and self-empowerment for all Americans who actively pursue it. We are committed to a system wherein legal immigration enables access to the “American Dream” while preventing entry of persons or organizations that intend to instill fear or to harm the American people.

**Self-Governance**—WE ARE COMMITTED to safeguarding the rights of people to choose their form of government, wherein changes in governance reflect the will of the people. Additionally, we are committed to the peaceful resolution of disputes that threaten a nation’s security, sovereignty or territory.

**Cooperative Security**—WE ARE COMMITTED to fostering cooperation among all nations to eliminate and defeat the scourges of terrorism, genocide, famine and the abuse of human rights so that every person has the opportunity to prosper and to live in peace. We are devoted to promoting peace by reducing the risks of armed conflict through diplomacy, assurance, deterrence and progressive arms control.

**Economic Access**—WE ARE COMMITTED to domestic and international economic collaboration which encourages strong, innovative and growing national economies in a fair and open global system that promotes opportunity. Additionally, we are committed to safeguarding the freedom of commercial traffic at sea, in the air, on land, online and through space in accordance with the common laws of nations.

**Environmental Conservation**—WE ARE COMMITTED to working with all nations to be faithful stewards of our natural resources—including air, water and space—to ensure a cleaner, safer and healthier planet for generations to come. Preserving our planet is not just a global imperative—it is a national one.

*In pursuit of these aspirations, American leadership must promote peace and security—both at home and abroad—to ensure that its citizens are free to live in societies abundant with opportunities. While we cannot be the world’s policeman, the United States alone possesses the ability to undergird a global system that protects the innocent from man-made terror and natural disasters. By committing to the aforementioned principles, the United States will better ensure safety and quality of life for its citizens—both current and future.*

**General Gordon Sullivan, USA Ret.**

*President, Association of the United States Army*

**The Honorable Rudy DeLeon**

*Former Deputy Secretary of Defense*

**Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker**

*Former Ambassador to Iraq, Afghanistan*

**Professor Graham Allison**

*Director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs*

**General Walter "Skip" Sharp, USA Ret.**

*Former Commander, United States Forces Korea*

**Lieutenant General Guy Swan, USA Ret.**

*Vice President, Association of the United States Army*

**Dr. Michael J. Meese**

*Chief Operating Officer, American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association*

**Dr. John S. Brown**

*Former Chief of Military History, United States Army*

**Colonel Mark "Puck" Mykleby, USMC Ret.**

*Co-director, Strategic Innovation Lab, Case Western Reserve University*

**Ms. Rosa Brooks**

*Professor of Law, Georgetown University*

**Ms. Mackenzie Eaglen**

*Fellow, American Enterprise Institute*

**Mr. Richard M. Lim**

*National Security Analyst*

**Ms. Linda Robinson**

*Senior International Policy Analyst*

**Ms. Emma Sky**

*Senior Fellow, Jackson Institute, Yale University*

**Mr. Haris Tarin**

*Senior Policy Advisor, Department of Homeland Security*

**Dr. Martin Feldstein**

*George F. Baker Professor of Economics, Harvard University, and President Emeritus, National Bureau of Economic Research*

**The Honorable James K. Glassman**

*Former Under Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy*

**Ambassador James F. Jeffrey**

*Former Deputy National Security Advisor*

**The Honorable Lincoln Bloomfield Jr.**

*Former Assistant Secretary of State and Special Envoy*

**Ambassador Charlie P. Ries**

*Former Ambassador to Greece*

**Lieutenant General James M. Dubik, USA Ret.**

*Senior Fellow, Institute for the Study of War*

**Brigadier General Kevin Ryan, USA Ret.**

*Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center*

**Dr. Pete Mansoor**

*Professor of History, The Ohio State University*

**Lieutenant Colonel Doug Merritt**

*Army Fellow, Association of the United States Army*

**Ms. Anita Dunn**

*Managing Director, SKDKnickerbocker*

**Dr. Dan Gouré**

*Vice President, Lexington Institute*

**Mr. David Merritt**

*Managing Director, Luntz Global Partners*

**Mr. Charles Schellpeper**

*Association of the United States Army*

**Dr. Mark A. Stoler**

*Professor Emeritus of History, University of Vermont*



**Association of the United States Army**

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