

***Video of the following speech can be found [here](#).***

Tonight, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley delivered the following speech on the House floor:

"Thank you, Madam Speaker. Eight years ago, the U.S. entered Afghanistan. Now, eight years later, after 791 American deaths and billions of dollars we must ask: what have we gained? Has our eight years in Afghanistan made us safer? And will eight more years make us safer still?

As we speak, the administration is reviewing the best strategy to achieve one primary objective: to protect Americans from another terrorist attack. We agree on the objective. We differ on the strategy. As we move to define our strategy the question we must continue to ask ourselves is:

*How*

do we keep Americans safe from a terrorist attack?

Recent events suggest that we need to broaden our focus and think bigger than Afghanistan.

After all, we are battling not simply against *terrorists* in Afghanistan, but against *terrorism*, which we are learning has many fronts, extending from Afghanistan to Pakistan to Somalia, Yemen, Uzbekistan, and even our own backyard.

Over the past two weeks, five men have been arrested for plotting terror attacks in our country.

One man lived in New York for more than a decade and was planning to detonate a bomb there on the anniversary of September 11.

Thomas Friedman argued in his recent *New York Times* column that the most active front in this war against terrorism is “not Afghanistan, but the ‘virtual Afghanistan’ – the loose network of thousands of jihadist Web sites, mosques and prayer groups that recruit, inspire and train young Muslims to kill.”

The young Jordanian who was recently arrested for attempting to blow up a building in Dallas, was caught after declaring war on the U.S. on jihadist websites. We must broaden our focus.

Jihadist networks are also gaining ground in unstable states such as Somalia and Yemen.

Recently, a source at the U.S. defense agency stated: “We know that the South Asia is no longer Al Qaeda’s primary base. They are looking for a hide-out in other parts of the world and continue to expand their organization.” We must broaden our focus.

Two weeks ago a major Uzbek terrorist with links to the Taliban and Al-Qaeda was killed in South Pakistan. The man killed was the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a group whose goal was to set up an Islamic state there and ultimately throughout Central Asia.

We must broaden our focus because the Jihad has no borders. And, thus, our security policy must have no borders.

James Traub recently likened jihadism to Communism without Russia, explaining that “its success or failure is measured in ideological rather than territorial terms.” That is the threat we face. A threat based not on borders, but on beliefs.

Which brings us back to our initial question: *How can we best keep Americans safe from an ideological and borderless threat?* We have sunk billions of dollars into Afghanistan, but at some point we must prioritize our spending on terrorism. The reality is, we have limited resources, measured both in lives and tax dollars, and we must expend those resources carefully and pragmatically.

“The problems of this world are deeper, more involved, and more stubborn than many of us realize,” said George Keenan, scholar and diplomat in 1949 speech to the Academy of Political Science. “It is imperative,” he continued, “therefore, that we economize with our limited resources and that we apply them where we feel that we will do the most good.” If pouring a large portion of our precious resources into Afghanistan will keep Americans safe, then so be it.

But the realization that we are battling a world-wide network of jihadists, might require us to step back and reassess our priorities.

If we are ever to achieve our objective of keeping America safe from another terrorist attack, we must, as Mr. Keenan suggests, apply our “limited resources” where they will “do the most good.”

Where that exactly is, we have yet to determined. But we must careful of basing our strategy on borders, when the enemy we are fighting is borderless.”

