

Dear President Obama,

The United States faces many obstacles in the 21st century. Nuclear weapons are inevitably here to stay, but that does not mean that there should be widespread nuclear proliferation. Eight nations acknowledge having nuclear weapons, and the number of states with nuclear weapons should henceforth remain the same; however, we also believe that in addition to banding together to prevent other nations from establishing nuclear-weapon capabilities, these nations that have weapons should reduce their number of weapons by at least half as a gesture of compromise and action while also signing a treaty of some sort stringently restricting the usage of these weapons. A total abandonment of nuclear weapons, although ideal, is unrealistic because there could always be the prospect of dangerous, rogue nations gaining access to nuclear weaponry after full disarmament has taken place. In regard to members of the group of nations with nuclear weapons becoming hostile, an obdurate stance must be taken by the other members of the nuclear nations to convey the consequences—whether they are trade embargoes or a full-scale invasion—if a nation were to threaten using nuclear weaponry in a belligerent manner against other countries.

Iran is one of the most obvious examples of a nation that, although not currently in possession of nuclear weaponry, could act dangerously with the acquisition of said weapons. Incidentally, in accordance with the aforementioned nuclear policy, Iran would be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons. Iran desires nuclear weapons to assert itself as a predominant nation in global affairs. The odds that Iran would actually use these weapons, however, are unlikely if the protocol of the proposed nuclear policy is followed because of the imminent backlash from other nations with nuclear weapons that it calls for. In addition to such a seemingly hard-line approach, Iran must be convinced that it can be a prominent player in global politics without nuclear weapons. Firstly however, we feel as though it is necessary that nations with entangling, inflammatory histories in Iran—mainly the United States, Great Britain, and Russia—should admit to past mistakes in interfering in Iran and emphasize that cooperation with them isn't subscribing to a new age of imperialism.

Another significant obstacle the United States faces in the 21st century is the current immigration policy mainly dealing with the Mexican border. The recent influx in immigrants from Mexico has made many natural-born Americans fearsome; they argue that immigrants work for less money and in turn take jobs away from "Americans." Also, they say that immigrants increase crime rates. In a way, both of these statements are true: If the United States keeps these incoming immigrants illegal, then a lack of tax revenue from their undocumented work can hurt the economy and also take away jobs. Violence would increase merely because of the sheer number of immigrants coming into the United States—more people means a higher likelihood of crime.

However, if the United States allows these mainly Mexican immigrants to become citizens instead of deporting them once they are already there, then the U.S. economy could be bolstered by a surge in tax revenue from these immigrants who come to the United States for one reason: to find work. Also, efforts should be increased to teach English to Mexican immigrants while also extending the instruction of Spanish in American schools. Instead of trying to prevent the inevitable, the U.S. should

embrace the change in its demographics that, as in the late 19th century, helped pave the way for the United States' becoming one of the most powerful nations in the world.

Terrorism has become one of the most important issues strapping the United States in the 21st century thus far, but our approach needs to be refined. Instead of a constant game of cat-and-mouse in which we try to stay one step ahead of terrorists and their methods, more focus should be placed on stymieing the causes and roots of terrorism. It may seem unduly idealistic to try and resolve the problem of terrorism through a heightened understanding of the cultural nuances of various world societies, but it is inevitably the only surefire way to thwart terrorism. For example, short term goals should be set that revolve around finding out the roots of the anger that causes many youths to be drawn into terrorism; once we understand the rationale then we will have a much better idea of how to ameliorate the problem instead of the ad hoc approach that has marked U.S. policy for too long. In the long term, our goals should be addressing the factors that contribute to terrorism. Many times the cause will be historical or the only way to satisfy the problem will call for something impossible such as total surrender. However, talks will be the only way to work through these issues because it is ignorance of understanding, not only on our part, but on the terrorists' part as well that has fueled the flames of anger that surround this issue.

The overarching theme of all of these approaches to various issues is cooperation. In the future the United States should play its part in working toward a more cooperative world because issues such as pollution and drug trafficking are not restricted to individual nations. As seen by the current economic crisis, countries' economies and in turn the happenings of their societies are now inextricably connected. Therefore, the United States' should resign some of its unilateral authority to make sure that other world voices can be heard because it is now impossible for us to always act in our own best interest when a financial move such as protectionism may benefit us in the short term but ruin our economy and the world economy in the long term. Today, more than ever, we must cease standing alone and work together for any hope of prosperity in this new century.

Sincerely,

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