

Dear Mr. President,

We believe that the most important issues the U.S. will have to face in order to remain a strong nation are the U.S. role in a changing world, our nuclear weapons policy, our response to international terrorism, our policy towards Iran, our response to genocide, and our immigration policy.

We believe that the best way to go forward is to balance protecting U.S. global interests with building a more cooperative world. In dealing with the U.S. role in a changing world, our foreign policy must strive for order and security. International terrorism, Middle East chaos, rising poverty around the world, and global economic competition have put U.S. leaders in a difficult position. We need to focus our foreign policy on protecting our own security, cultivating key trade relationships that ensure our access to crucial raw materials, and stopping the spread of nuclear weapons to hostile nations or terrorist networks. We need to be careful and selective in our involvement in international affairs, but we must be prepared to take action to defend ourselves against any legitimate threats to our security, even if others may resent us for our action.

On the other hand, we live today in an interdependent and interconnected world, and there are some issues on which we need to cooperate with the world. National boundaries cannot halt the spread of AIDs, international drug trafficking, international terrorism, and other global problems. We must lead in strengthening the role of the U.N. in maintaining international security and responding to problems such as environmental pollution, refugees, and AIDs. It is particularly important to have international cooperation in order to solve the current global financial and economic crisis.

We believe that three of the most important international challenges facing the U.S. over the next ten years are that a clash of ideologies and political values will fuel conflict and instability in the world, that despite the financial crisis the gulf between developed and developing nations will widen and common problems will become harder to address, and that U.S. troops will get bogged down in conflicts abroad. This last problem does not mean, however, that we shouldn't take the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan seriously and do our best to maintain security against terrorism for the world and for the peoples of Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We believe that preventing the spread of nuclear weapons is the most important foreign policy of the U.S. We believe that we should not completely eliminate our own nuclear weapons, but we should significantly reduce our nuclear arsenal through treaties with the major nuclear powers, particularly Russia. We believe that the threat of deterrence can effectively protect the U.S. from attacks by other states. Nonetheless, it would be immoral to use nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear strategies must be developed to defend the U.S. in the event of an attack. The threat of deterrence will not work to protect the U.S. from nuclear attack by a terrorist network. The U.S. must do all that it can to prevent nuclear weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

Nuclear weapons do not reduce the likelihood of war between states with smaller nuclear arsenals, such as Pakistan and India. The U.S. must cooperate with the U.N. in order to maintain peace between Pakistan and India.

The U.S. response to international terrorism requires cooperation with other nations. At the same time we should carefully use all our resources to defend our homeland and crush terrorist networks. But we must not betray our own values in order to defend ourselves. The U.S. must also address the root causes of terrorism by making sure that its foreign policy does not inflame long-standing local and regional conflicts and breed anti-American sentiment.

In dealing with Iran, we must recognize that war against Iran is not an option. War would be too dangerous, for many reasons. We must engage Iran with tough diplomacy, making sure that Iran understands and respects our security needs and that the U.S. understands and respects the needs of the Iranian people. Our top priority in engaging with Iran is making sure that it does not develop or otherwise obtain nuclear weapons.

In dealing with genocide, the U.S. must realize that state sovereignty no longer applies when a state fails to protect its own people from genocide. Overthrow of the state's government should be the last resort, but military action and humanitarian aid should be used to protect the people from genocide and keep the peace.

Immigration itself is not a problem if done legally. The problem with illegal immigration is that illegal immigrants' labor is often exploited without decent pay because illegal immigrants often do not learn adequate English and because employers can use the threat of exposure for exploitation. Some way should be found to make immigration easier and more efficient for potential immigrants, so that immigrants can come legally. We should provide education and English language training to immigrants in order that they may more speedily and easily integrate into life in the U.S. At the same time, we should increase foreign aid and better our trade programs so that less people feel the need to immigrate.

Thank you for your time. We hope you consider the viewpoints we have expressed.

Sincerely,

Signature School, Evansville, IN