

A close-up photograph of Barack Obama, looking upwards and to the left with a thoughtful expression. His hand is resting on his chin. He is wearing a dark suit, a white shirt, and a dark tie. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

Are You Safer?

the Center for Security Policy reports
on the Obama Presidency

Are You Safer?

The Center for Security Policy on the First Year
of the Obama Presidency

PREFACE

This purpose of this first volume of the **Are You Safer?** project is to highlight selected policy and legislative actions taken during the first year of the Obama Presidency that have demonstrably undermined our allies, emboldened our enemies, and endangered our national security.

The **Are You Safer?** project to document the current administration's national security policies will be updated weekly at the Center's website. Please visit <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/p18295.xml> to view additional selections for 2009, the rapidly growing list of selections for 2010, and the list of expert contributors and analysts.

To suggest policy decisions for inclusion in **Are You Safer?** please email Ben Lerner, the Center's Director of Policy Operations, at lerner@securefreedom.org.

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January 2009

21 JANUARY 2009

White House website announces willingness to talk to Iran “without preconditions”

Source: Borger, Julian, “[Barack Obama: Administration willing to talk to Iran ‘without preconditions’](#),” *The Guardian*, 21 January 2009.

The day after President Obama’s inauguration, the White House website posted a statement saying that the Obama administration was willing to talk to Iran “without preconditions” and that it intended to work towards the abolition of nuclear weapons. By declaring itself committed to a foreign policy of appeasement and disarmament, the Obama White House essentially unilaterally disarmed itself before the entire world on its first day in office. Given the realities of an Iranian regime zealously dedicated to achieving a deliverable nuclear weapon, wiping Israel off the face of the map, exporting revolution and terror abroad, and brutally suppressing all domestic dissent, such a posture is exceptionally dangerous to U.S. national security and that of our friends and allies.

21 JANUARY 2009

Obama invites president of Islamic Society of North America (ISNA) to speak at inaugural prayer service

Source: The Investigative Project on Terrorism. “[ISNA’s Mattson to Speak at Inaugural Prayer Service](#).” *IPT News*. 20 January 2009.

ISNA was an unindicted co-conspirator in the Holy Land Foundation terrorism financing trial, and was founded by the Muslim Brotherhood, a Shariah-promoting organization that has the self-described goal of “destroying American civilization from within.” Embracing ISNA sends a dangerous sig-

nal to Shariah-supporting jihadists that the United States does not recognize the threat posed by jihadist doctrine.

22 JANUARY 2009

DNI-Designate Adm. Dennis Blair issues conciliatory statement on Iran

Source: Mikkelsen, Randall, “[Obama spy choice sees opportunity on Iran, Muslims](#),” *Reuters*, 22 January 2009.

Two days after the inauguration of the Obama administration, Director of National Intelligence-designate Adm. Dennis Blair asserted that U.S. intelligence agencies should seek ways to work with Muslim countries such as Iran. While admitting that there exist “anti-American leaders, policies and actions in Iran,” he said that intelligence agencies can also help U.S. policymakers to identify and understand “other leaders and political forces” in order to find common ground “in both our interests.” Coming from the U.S.’s top appointed intelligence official, a statement like this at the very outset of the new U.S. administration served to let the Tehran regime know that the hallmark of the new team would be dialogue and a willingness to turn a blind eye to Iran’s defiance of U.N. Security Council Resolutions regarding its nuclear weapons program, its support for Islamic jihadi terrorists abroad, and abysmal human rights record at home. Further, Blair’s understanding of the national security responsibilities of the U.S. Intelligence Community towards this country’s adversaries would appear to be deeply flawed.

22 JANUARY 2009

Terrorist holding facilities closed

Source: [Executive Order 13491 Ensuring Lawful Interrogations](#) Sec. 4(a). Prohibition of Certain Detention Facilities

Immediately upon taking office, Obama ordered that the CIA shall close “any detention facilities that it currently operates and shall not operate any such detention facility in the future.” On the one hand, CIA personnel are being asked to risk their lives on the frontlines against terrorists; on the

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

other, they cannot set up the basic infrastructure they need to succeed. It is predictable that time-urgent intelligence will be lost because captured terrorists cannot be held in U.S. controlled facilities in the field.

22 JANUARY 2009

White House task force to micro-manage detainee interrogations

Source: [Executive Order 13491 Ensuring Lawful Interrogations Sec. 5\(a\) Establishment of Special Interagency Task Force](#)

Immediately upon taking office, Obama set up an inter-agency task force to oversee and review detainee interrogations and transfers, removing lead responsibility for such interrogations from wartime intelligence operations and turning it over to the law enforcement/criminal prosecution-oriented FBI. More bureaucratic layers and more Washington second-guessing mean a less agile, more risk-averse war effort to go after terrorists and the time urgent intelligence America needs to stop them and protect lives.

22 JANUARY 2009

Terrorist detainees ordered to be tried in civilian courts

Source: [Executive Order 13492, Review and Disposition of Individuals Detained at the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base and Closure of Detention Facilities Sec. 4 \(c\) \(3\) Determination of Prosecution.](#)

Immediately upon taking office, Obama directed that GITMO detainees shall be released, transferred or tried in civilian courts -- another case of act first, think later. Now terrorists can count on the same protections given U.S. citizens under the constitution -- the very system of government they seek to destroy -- including the right against self-incrimination. Captured terrorists are our best source of intelligence -- except when they are told they have the right not to talk.

27 JANUARY 2009

President Obama gives first formal TV interview to Al-Arabiya and offers 'hand of friendship' to Iran

Source: ["Obama reaches out to Muslim world," BBC, 27 January 2009.](#)

One week into his new administration, President Obama gave his first formal television interview to the Saudi-funded, Arabic language Al-Arabiya network. In it, he offered the hand of friendship to Iran if it "unclenched its fist." Aside from the symbolism of this choice of outlets, Obama's over-eager outreach signaled a U.S. posture of supplication vis-à-vis thuggish theocrats whose regime remains according to the Department of State the preeminent state-sponsor of terror in the world. Such a proffer was immediately taken by the Iranian regime and other Muslim/Arab audiences as an unambiguous indication of American weakness. In such circles, far from encouraging moderation and conciliation, weakness spawns aggression and belligerence

29 JANUARY 2009

President Obama Drafts a letter to Iranian President Ahmadinejad

Source: [MacAskill, Ewen and Robert Tait, "Revealed: the letter Obama team hope will heal Iran rift," Guardian, 29 January 2009.](#)

The British press reported in late January 2009 that the Obama State Department was working on a letter from Obama to the Iranian regime intended to unfreeze relations and open the way for bilateral talks. The letter, oddly never acknowledged by the Obama White House, reportedly was intended as a reply to Iranian president Ahmadinejad's letter of congratulations, sent after Obama's November 2008 election win. The Obama administration's insistence upon demonstrating pacific intentions towards the Tehran regime through a gentlemanly exchange of diplomatically-worded missives projected a deadly image of weakness at the outset of its tenure. That image will cripple U.S. foreign policy with a regime and in a part of the world where only strength is respected.



JANUARY - DECEMBER 2009

The Administration refuses to detain the vast majority of illegal workers they find

Sources: Alden, Edward. "Obama Quietly Changes U.S. Immigration Policy," New American Media. December 28 2009; Mayer, Matt A., "U.S. Border Security: Realities and Challenges for the Obama Administration." The Heritage Foundation. June 17, 2009.

The Administration has also drastically revised immigration policy, by halting workplace raids, stripping local law enforcement of its ability to pursue illegals, closing down detention facilities, and allowing "political asylum" applicants to live freely in the United States.

JANUARY 2009 - JANUARY 2010

Obama Administration appoints supporters of rapprochement with Tehran to top U.S. foreign policy positions

Source: Lopez, Clare, "Supporters of 'dialogue' with the Iranian Mullahs Keep the US from 'meddling' on behalf of freedom," Center for Security Policy, 22 June 2009. See also: Ward, Jon, "It's official: controversial Chas Freeman to NIC," The Washington Times, 26 Feb 09.

The current, dangerous policy of conciliation and rapprochement towards the terrorist regime in Tehran was advanced by key appointments to the Obama administration. Prominent among these were individuals who have long records of advocating appeasement, diplomacy and engagement with the mullahs, while opposing condemnation of the regime, coercive diplomacy, or military force even as a final resort. Among these appointees were: Dr. Susan Rice (U.N. Ambassador); Dr. Vali Nasr (senior advisor to President Obama's Special Envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke); Dennis Ross (senior Iran advisor at the National Security Council); and Ray Takeyh (Assistant to the U.S. Special Advisor for the Gulf and Southwest Asia). Another was nominated to be chairman of the National Intelligence Council but withdrew his name in the face of a storm of criticism, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Charles W. Freeman, Jr.

February 2009

4 FEBRUARY 2009

U.S. Treasury designates the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) a terrorist organization

Source: U.S. Department of the Treasury, Office of Foreign Assets Control, "Recent OFAC Actions," 4 February 2009.

The U.S. Treasury designated the Free Life Party of Kurdistan (PJAK) a terrorist organization under Executive Order 13224. Pursuant to this action, the US froze the group's assets and prohibited American citizens from doing business with it. This action was designed to be a conciliatory gesture to the Turkish government, which views the PJAK as an element of the Turkish terrorist organization, the PKK. By designating as a terrorist organization a group whose primary focus is the rights of Kurds inside Iran, however, the U.S. government sent a signal to all opponents of the mullahs' regime that the Obama administration prioritizes efforts to establish a relationship with the Tehran regime above all else.

8 FEBRUARY 2009

Vice President Biden announces that the U.S. desires to "reset" relations with Russia at the Munich International Security Council

Source: "'Reset' Sought on Relations With Russia, Biden Says," The Washington Post, 8 February, 2009.

The statement that the new administration was determined to "reset" U.S.-Russian relations implied that all or most previous Kremlin positions were, in fact, valid and made it harder for the U.S. to defend its legitimate security interests in relations with Russia. It also increased the threat to Russia's neighbors, particularly Georgia. For example, there is strong evidence that the decision to invade Georgia in April 2008

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

was taken after NATO failed to offer a Membership Action Plan to Georgia and Ukraine during its annual summit in Bucharest. Russia did not achieve its strategic objectives in the subsequent invasion of Georgia in August of that year. Saakashvili is still in power and Georgia still serves as a supply corridor for energy for the West. Many Russian leaders want to finish the job and may see in the “reset” new opportunities to do so.

20 FEBRUARY 2009

Clinton downgrades human rights in relations with Beijing

Source: Hillary Clinton. “Working Toward Change in Perceptions of U.S. Engagement Around the World.” US Department of State. February 20, 2009.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton said human rights can’t interfere with other issues to be discussed with Beijing. Chinese leaders were reported to have been ecstatic when she said these words as they signaled Washington’s perceptions of its own weakness. In fact, Beijing adopted a markedly more aggressive attitude toward the United States since then.

26 FEBRUARY 2009

Tax hike to put “mom and pop” oil producers out of business

Source: Hebert, H. Josef, “Obama: New tax on oil drilling,” Associated Press/North Dakota News. February 26, 2009; National Stripper Well Association. [Press Statement](#) on Obama Administration’s Extraction Tax Policies. 12 August 2009.

Obama sought new taxes on new drilling in his 2010 budget that could put small “mom and pop” producers out of business, according to the group representing “stripper wells” – those yielding only about 15 barrels daily of harder to extract oil, but which add up to over a million barrels per day. This one measure, taken ironically in the name of “energy independence,” could reduce domestic oil output by 15.4 percent and gas output by about 9 percent almost overnight by penalizing small producers at home who produce about as much oil as we import from our friends the Saudis. “The

decreased production that will result from the proposed tax increases will have a catastrophic effect upon the American consumer since less domestic oil means higher prices,” said Dewey Bartlett, Jr., chairman of the National Stripper Well Association. “The OPEC leadership will have almost exclusive control over the world-wide pricing of crude oil as well as all products refined from crude oil such as gasoline, jet fuel and diesel fuel.

26 FEBRUARY 2009

White House announces plans to slash the U.S. Defense Budget

Sources: Congressional Budget Office, Office of Management and Budget, “A New Era of Responsibility: Renewing America’s Promise,” 26 February, 2009, Table S-8; and Office of Management and Budget, *Budget of the United States Government, FY 2010, Historical Tables*, Table 5.1.

The Obama Administration releases a 10-year budget plan which proposes a declining defense budget, beginning at 3.81 percent of gross domestic product in 2010 and dropping to a startling 3.01 percent in 2019. Flat or declining defense budgets will undermine the U.S. military’s ability to meet its commitments.

26 FEBRUARY 2009

Locking up land, increasing energy insecurity

Sources: “Bush Oil-Shake Leases Canceled by Salazar,” *The Washington Post*, 26 February, 2009; “Energy Experts Agree: CLEAR Act (H.R. 3534) Will Delay American Wind, Solar, Uranium, Oil and Natural Gas Production,” House Natural Resources Committee Republican Press Office. 18 September, 2009.

While proclaiming a drive for “energy independence,” President Obama’s administration canceled deals for domestic oil and gas exploration that had been approved by the Bush administration, and sealed off much of the rest of the country from hydrocarbon exploration and production. This entailed excluding hundreds of thousands of acres from land-lease deals for domestic energy E&P (e.g., Utah, Colorado), shortening lease-times and slow-walking the extant Bush plan for a billion more acres (U.S. Outer Continental Shelf). The cumulative effect was to leave the United States

more dependent on foreign energy sources by making it harder to find and exploit American oil and natural gas reserves.

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 9

Loss of key financial talent to foreign competitors threatens economic security

Sources: "Bankers Face Sweeping Curbs on Pay," *The Wall Street Journal*, 18 September 2009; "FDIC to bonus-loving banks: Pay up!" *CNN Money*, 12 January 2010; and "Hedge funds may benefit from bank bonus clampdown," *Reuters*, 16 December 2009.

Government-mandated limits on compensation and bonuses, including those dictated by the "pay czar," regulatory limits and excessive taxation on banker pay (including executives, traders, and loan officers) have created a climate that promotes an exodus of top talent to less-regulated areas, including foreign hedge funds. From the lens of an economic warfare perspective, this is tantamount to sending the best warriors to the opposition. A loss of this talent threatens U.S. capital market superiority, which has provided superior economic growth and supported the national security.

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 0 9

Obama signs \$787 billion stimulus into law; excessive budget deficits put U.S. Dollar and economy in jeopardy

Sources: "Deficit Projected to Soar with New Programs," *The Washington Post*, 26 August 2009; "Obama's Tripling of the National Debt," *The Heritage Foundation*, 28 August 2009; "Stimulus? There's No Stimulus Here," *The Wall Street Journal*, 11 January 2010; "China bidding dollar goodbye? Harvard economist says currency dying 'slow death,'" *WorldNetDaily*, 23 October 2009; "Dollar Reaches Breaking Point as Banks Shift," *Bloomberg*, 12 October 2009.

Massive stimulus programs with primary effect of wealth transfer rather than productive investment have ballooned the government debt in both the near- and longer-term. This debt will require historic government borrowing predominantly from foreign sources, providing tremendous leverage by China and other creditor nations and placing the dollar at

risk of mass devaluation and loss of reserve currency status. Such trends compromise the U.S. economy and hinders future governmental ability to fund national defense, essentially mimicking several factors that led to collapse of the Soviet Union.

March 2009

1 3 M A R C H 2 0 0 9

Congress introduces Open Fuel Standard Act, but both the executive and legislative branch fail to move it forward in 2009

Source: THOMAS Library of Congress Database. [House Version](#) (HR 1476) and [Senate Version](#) (S.835).

The Open Fuel Standard Act (OFS) requires that most cars made or sold in the United States be "flex fuel vehicles" – that is, automobiles capable of operating on gasoline, ethanol (from any source) or methanol (from any source) or any combination of the three. Providing fuel choice at the pump will reduce the strategic value of oil, making countries that sponsor or enable terrorism less capable of using oil revenues to bankroll terror or threatening to bring the global economy to a halt. This commonsensical and urgently needed means of providing the consumer with "fuel choice" and of undermining the OPEC cartel could have been enacted by now but has not been due to a lack of leadership from the President and his allies on Capitol Hill.

1 3 M A R C H 2 0 0 9

No longer "enemy combatants," terrorist supporters have new legal protections against being detained

Source: *In Re: Guantanamo Bay Litigation*, Respondents' Memorandum Regarding the Government's Detention Authority Relative to Detainees Held at Guantanamo Bay, U.S. District Court District of Columbia Misc. No. 08-442 (TFH), March 13, 2009.

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

Under new standards promulgated by the Obama administration, individuals who supported al Qaeda or the Taliban are detainable only if the support was “substantial” and the term “enemy combatant” is struck from the official lexicon in favor of “unlawful enemy belligerents.” House Intelligence Committee ranking member Pete Hoekstra says this means that, “If we knew that Mohammed Atta had planned to board a plane tomorrow and we had intelligence that he intended to fly it into the World Trade Center, we could not hold him unless he provided ‘substantial’ support to other terrorists,” In other words, “intention and intelligence become irrelevant.”

17 MARCH 2009

President waives export control to allow transfer of high-tech items to China

Source: President Barack Obama. “[Message to the Congress from the President concerning exports to China.](#)” The White House. March 17, 2009.

The President certified that the transfer of certain inherently dual-use items would not “measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities” of China. Unfortunately, Beijing sees space primarily in military terms. In view of the substantial advances in the Chinese space program (notably, its anti-satellite and other space-control capabilities), the United States should not export any technology or equipment that can help China improve its ability to dominate space in the absence of congressional approval.

21 MARCH 2009

Obama ‘Nowruz’ greetings convey weakness to regime and alienate Iranian people

Source: Aryamand, Mani, “[Khamenei Slams Obama Nowruz Message,](#)” *Marz-e Por Gohar Party*, 27 March 2009.

After President Obama sent official greetings to “the Islamic Republic of Iran” on the occasion of the traditional Persian New Year (‘Nowruz’), Iran’s Supreme Leader Khamenei responded by slamming the U.S. president, whom he said had “insulted the Islamic Republic of Iran from the first

day.” The Obama administration apparently inadvertently marked the occasion of an ancient, pre-Islamic celebration of spring that is scorned by Iran’s revolutionary clerics. Further, by referring to “the Islamic Republic of Iran,” Obama managed to insult the Iranian people as well, who cherish their Nowruz observances as a tradition that pre-dates the Arab Islamic conquest by more than a thousand years.

23 MARCH 2009

Obama nominates transnationalist Harold Koh to be State Department Legal Adviser

Source: The White House Press Office. “[President Obama Announces more key Administration Posts.](#)” 23 March 2009.

Harold Koh, President Obama’s choice for State Department Legal Adviser, subscribes to “transnationalism” – the view that American jurisprudence should be “informed by” (read, subordinated to) international legal regimes and “norms” and that courts, not Congress, should take the lead in “internalizing” international law into domestic law so as to better develop a “global legal system.” Koh’s views are demonstrated through his support for such sovereignty-sapping global legal arrangements as the International Criminal Court and the Law of the Sea Treaty, his belief that UN authorization is required prior to any U.S. use of force, and other notions that serve to erode American constitutional governance and exceptionalism.

25 MARCH 2009

Treasury Secretary Geithner says the U.S. “open” to a global currency

Source: Roger C. Altman and Timothy F. Geithner. “[A Conversation with Timothy F. Geithner.](#)” Council on Foreign Relations. March 25, 2009.

In so doing, he encouraged the Chinese, the Russians, Persian Gulf states and others who seek substantially to diminish the power of the United States in international markets and commerce. Beijing has proposed the adoption of a global currency to replace the American dollar. Such a new currency could also limit Washington’s ability to manage the

American economy. Efforts to supplant the dollar as the world's preeminent reserve currency should be discouraged, not abetted by the U.S. government.

April 2009

6 APRIL 2009

Terminating acquisition of America's most advanced military aircraft and shutting down its only hot production line for "fifth generation" fighters

Source: Defense Industry Daily, "Gates Lays Out Key FY 2010 Budget Recommendations," April 6, 2009.

The Obama administration capped F-22 Raptor procurement at 187 aircraft, despite Air Force Chief of Staff General Norton Schwartz's assessment that only 243 F-22s would place the Air Force at moderate risk during future conflicts. The Air Force has said that an inventory of just 183 Raptors would entail "moderate to high" risk.

6 APRIL 2009

Obama gives speech in Turkey, apologizing for America, even as Turkey embraces Iran, Syria

Source: Remarks of President Obama in Address to the Turkish Parliament (April 6, 2009)

At a time when President Obama should have been voicing deep concern over Turkey's growing entente with Iran and Syria – both anti-democratic sponsors of global terrorism – he traveled to Istanbul to give a speech before the so-called "Muslim world" which amounted to an apology for past American policies and behavior. Such "outreach" only served to embolden the Turkish leadership to intensify its rapprochement with its longtime adversaries, Iran and Syria, and reinforces the impression of Western submission to Is-

lam that can only intensify the jihadist ambitions of the ideology authoritative Islam calls "Shariah."

16 APRIL 2009

Justice Department legal opinions on terrorist interrogations disclosed and overruled by the Obama Administration

Source: Office of the Legal Counsel (OLC) at the Department of Justice Website. See [OLC Opinions Disclosed by the Obama Administration](#) 16 April 2009

Obama released detailed information on specific "enhanced" interrogation techniques, enabling enemies to exploit the revelations for propaganda value and rendering those techniques useless. In the wake of such disclosures of extremely sensitive information, foreign intelligence partners have become more reluctant to trust American counterparts with their secrets; cooperation is already shutting down in some areas. And we are left with the question no one wants to ask. What if the United States captures a terrorist with perishable knowledge of a pending attack: Will the new, tempered interrogation guidelines be good enough to elicit such information in time?

17 APRIL 2009

Obama gives apologetic speech on Latin America

Source: Vucci, Evan, "Obama Pledges 'Equal Partnership' in the Americas." *USA Today* and Associated Press. 17 April 2009.

In a speech in Trinidad and Tobago, Obama continued what some have called his "international apology tour." He declared that "[The United States has] at times been disengaged, and at times we sought to dictate our terms. But I pledge to you that we seek an equal partnership. There is no senior partner and junior partner in our relations; there is simply engagement based on mutual respect and common interests and shared values...The United States will be willing to acknowledge past errors where those errors have been made." Obama's message was seized upon by America's

Are You Safer? THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

regional enemies like Venezuelan autocrat Hugo Chavez and discouraged its relatively few remaining friends in the hemisphere.

17 APRIL 2009

Obama lifts restrictions on travel to Cuba

Source: Stolberg, Sheryl Gay and Alexei Barrionuevo. "Obama Says the US will Pursue Thaw with Cuba." *The New York Times*, April 17, 2009.

President Obama acceded to pressure from the left-leaning Secretary General of the Organization of American States to ease the historic isolation by the OAS of the Castro Brothers' Cuba. Mr. Obama also unilaterally lifted restrictions on Cuban-Americans traveling to Cuba. Such U.S. concessions were not tied to reciprocal movement on democratic liberalization by the Castro regime or, for that matter by other despots in the hemisphere like Chavez in Venezuela or Daniel Ortega in Nicaragua.

19 APRIL 2009

Pentagon backs down in face of Chinese belligerence

Source: Roughead, Adm. Gary, "Press Conference of the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations." Embassy of the United States in the People's Republic of China. April 19, 2009.

Soon after the Chinese harassed unarmed U.S. Navy ships in international waters in the South China Sea (one of which probably constituted an act of war), the Navy proposed to "advance our military-to-military relationship and the context of a broader and comprehensive US-China relationship." The Navy should have publicly warned the Chinese instead of trying to provide more technology and operational know-how to Beijing. The Navy, however, was following the President Obama's lead in essentially soft-pedaling criticism of the Chinese for their aggressive conduct, an attitude he exhibited when he met with China's foreign minister on March 12.

May 2009

7 MAY 2009

White House requests no specific finding for border fence required by the Secure Fence Act of 2006

Source: "Obama's Budget Proposal Cuts Border Fence Funds," *The Dallas Morning News*. May 7, 2009.

Despite declaring border security and the violence along the southwest border to be an important issue, in its FY 2010 budget request, the Obama administration requested no funding specifically for the border barrier required by Congress in the Secure Fence Act of 2006. Homeland Security and FBI officials have testified on several occasions that suspected terrorists are among the large number of immigrants who have crossed into the United States illegally from Mexico.

12 MAY 2009

U.S. Envoy in Tehran just before journalist set free

Sources: "Senior Obama advisor comes to Iran: Report," *Iran Press TV*, 13 May 2009; McCarthy, Andrew, "Obama Frees Iranian Terror Masters," *National Review*, 11 July 2009.

Amid reports that U.S. Iranian-born envoy Vali Nasr was in Tehran, the American journalist Roxana Saberi was set free in a surprising conclusion to five months imprisonment on trumped up espionage charges. Two months later, in mid-July 2009, the Obama administration released five Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) Qods Force commanders who had been caught in Irbil, Iraq coordinating terrorist attacks that killed hundreds of U.S. troops. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the latter's release was forthcoming at least in part to secure Saberi's freedom. The willingness thus exhibited to accede to direct Iranian involvement in the deaths of American soldiers communicated to the Ira-

nian regime that such behavior would, under President Obama, be cost-free.

14 MAY 2009

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi accused CIA briefers of lying to her and other lawmakers about the use of enhanced interrogation techniques, such as waterboarding

Source: Klein, Ron and Human Khan. "House Speaker Nancy Pelosi: CIA Lied to Me." *ABC World News with Diane Sawyer*, 14 May 2009.

Pelosi had no proof to support this outlandish charge and was properly called out on it by both CIA Director (and former Representative) Leon Panetta and Republicans in Congress. In short order, the Speaker's allies were scrambling to find anything that would make CIA look bad. In so doing, they have played into the hands of America's adversaries who want nothing more than to discredit CIA. Politicians pay no political cost for attacking CIA, but the collateral effect is to expose secrets that make our adversaries' work easier. Not surprisingly, morale in the intelligence community has never been worse, which means new opportunities for enemy spy services out to recruit Americans to work for them.

21 MAY 2009

President Signs US-UAE Civilian Nuclear Cooperation Agreement

Source: Philip Walter Wellman, "US Signs Nuclear Deal with UAE," *Voice of America News*, December 18, 2009.

This deal is intended to clear the way for the United Arab Emirates to gain access to sensitive, inherently dual-use U.S. nuclear technology. Never mind that the UAE is a state that transships more advanced goods to Iran than any other nation. The agreement ostensibly was conditioned on the UAE not trying to make its own nuclear fuel (a process that brings states within weeks or months of getting the bomb). It is being sold as the model for pushing more such nuclear ac-

cords in the Middle East. But the deal also allows the UAE to ignore that key requirement if the U.S. strikes deals with other Middle Eastern states that has no such caveat. Also, the White House has failed to get other nuclear reactor-supplying states (notably, France) to impose similar conditions on their sales to the Middle East, opening the door further to Middle Eastern proliferation. Ironically, instead of the U.S. securing reactor sales to the UAE, the Emirates awarded the contract late in 2009 to South Korea.

MAY 2009

Iranian Supreme Leader Khamenei publicly spurns Obama letter

Source: MacAskill, Ewen, "Obama sent letter to Khamenei before the election, report says," *Guardian*, 24 June 2009

Sometime in May 2009, President Obama personalized his effort to "engage" the mullahs of Tehran by sending a private letter to the Iranian Supreme Leader. In it, he offered the prospect for cooperation in regional and bilateral relations and a resolution of the dispute over Iran's nuclear weapons program. Khamenei publicly and contemptuously spurned this initiative during a belligerent Friday prayers sermon one week after Iran's disputed June 12 presidential elections.

MAY 2009

Cutting core defense capabilities

Sources: Gingrich, Newt, "Maintaining America's Safety to Build Our Prosperity and Freedom," *Heritage Lecture #1128*, August 6, 2009; Talent, Jim and Mackenzie Eaglen, "Obama's 2010 Defense Budget: Top Five Worst Choices for National Security," *Heritage Web Memo #2486*, June 15, 2009.

President Obama submitted a defense budget request to Congress for fiscal year 2010 that will dramatically reshape America's military by cutting funding for key weapons acquisition programs, notably, the F-22 air superiority fighter, C-17 transport aircraft and missile defenses (for more on the last of these, see below). When Congress ultimately gave the Administration substantially what it wanted, America's

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

armed forces were denied capabilities that the troops require and that our citizens assume they will be afforded. Specific areas that are being impacted include, but are hardly limited to: strategic defense; control of the seas; air superiority; space control; projecting power to distant regions; and information dominance throughout cyberspace.

M A Y 2 0 0 9

Slashing missile defense funding and capabilities

Source: Department of Defense Fiscal Year 2010 Budget Request Summary Justification, p. 3-34.

The Obama Administration's FY 2010 defense budget request reduces total missile defense funding by \$1.62 billion – nearly a 15 percent decline from the FY 2009 appropriations level. A robust U.S. missile defense posture provides greater international stability and more successful non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament initiatives. Cutting U.S. missile defenses is undermining American allies and emboldening such foes as Iran and North Korea.

June 2009

2 J U N E 2 0 0 9

Government handling of GM bankruptcy transfers auto industry capability to China

Sources: "GM Collapses into Government's Arms," *The Wall Street Journal*, June 2, 2009; "2009/2010 Auto Industry Analysis: GM's Transition to China," *eMotion Reports*, December 2009.

The method with which the government has collapsed General Motors included a rush to sell off or close potentially strategic technology and manufacturing capabilities, including the Opel, Saab, Saturn, Pontiac, and Hummer lines. One of the prime beneficiaries of these fire-sales has been Communist China. Beijing has enhanced its indigenous capabilities to compete with U.S. car producers and secured some

level of de facto Chinese control over a vital U.S. company that has long enjoyed a significant position within that industry. Industry analysts regard these steps as but part of the endgame in China's takeover of the U.S. auto industry.

1 2 J U N E 2 0 0 9

U.S. observes passively as Iranian Security Forces brutally attack unarmed civilians protesting fraudulent elections

Source: "Obama Offers Rhetorical Support to Iran Protestors—Is It Enough?" *Fox News*, 28 December 2009.

When the Iranian population erupted in fury following the June 2009 announcement that President Mahmoud Ahmadi-nejad had emerged victorious in elections widely seen as fraudulent, President Obama reacted belatedly and timidly. When he did address the Tehran regime's repression of the "Green Revolution," Mr. Obama spoke only of "bearing witness" to the violent and bloody events unfolding on the streets of Iranian cities. His remarks were cynically calibrated to ensure no offense was given to the ruling clerics whose vicious black-clad Bassij forces were clubbing, gassing, knifing, and shooting their countrymen across Iran. In the subsequent months, as the demonstrations continued notwithstanding brutal repression intended to suppress those struggling against the tyranny that brutalizes them and threatens us, the Obama administration reluctantly expressed the bare minimum of rhetorical support for the Iranian freedom fighters—a posture that exposed its continuing, albeit unrequited, dedication to dialogue with the regime.

1 5 J U N E 2 0 0 9

Obama fights to repeal REAL-ID

Source: Kephart, Janice L. and Jena Baker McNeill, "The PASS ID Act: Rolling Back Security Standards for Driver's Licenses," *The Heritage Foundation*, June 28, 2009.

This administration made clear its ambition to repeal the REAL ID Act, legislation designed to make it vastly more difficult for illegal aliens, including terrorists, to obtain drivers' licenses. The Administration supports instead the PASS

ID, which weakens the REAL ID requirement that the issuance of identification documents used to obtain a driver's license must be verified. Eighteen of the 19 9/11 terrorists obtained more than 60 state driver's licenses between them, even though some of the jihadists were in the United States illegally. They used such IDs to board the planes with which they murdered nearly 3,000 Americans.

23 JUNE 2009

Obama returns Ambassador to Syria

Source: Wilson, Scott, "US To Return Ambassador to Syria after 4-Year Absence." *The Washington Post*. 23 June 2009

Syria is one of several countries listed by the State Department as a state sponsor of terrorism. Its support for Hezbollah and other terrorist organizations, as well as its relationship with Iran, are well known. Damascus has also played a leading role in destabilizing post-liberation Iraq and facilitating attacks on American forces there. Sending an ambassador back to Syria under these circumstances further emboldened that country's support for terrorism against the United States and Israel, and also had the effect of undermining Lebanon's democrats.

26 JUNE 2009

House of Representatives passes Cap-and-Trade legislation

Source: John Carey. "House Passes Carbon Cap-and-Trade Bill." *Bloomberg Businessweek Money & Politics*. 26 June 2009.

The House of Representatives passed "cap-and-trade" legislation that would place caps on carbon dioxide emissions, which some believe cause global climate change. If signed into law, cap-and-trade will substantially raise the cost of energy production and industrial operations in the United States, and will force consumers to pay the price in an already shaky economy.

29 JUNE 2009

Obama calls removal of Honduran President a "coup"

Source: Arshad Mohammed and David Alexander. "Obama Says Coup in Honduras is Illegal." *Reuters*, 29 June 2009.

When pro-Chavez Honduras President Mel Zelaya was deposed by order of the Honduran congress and supreme court, the Obama administration adopted the position of Hugo Chavez and his friends in the OAS, calling the removal a "coup d'etat" and demanding the restoration of Zelaya to power. In addition, the administration blocked \$30 million in aid to the impoverished country and revoked US visas of top Honduras officials in the interim government. Initially, Mr. Obama's State Department indicated that it would not recognize the scheduled November 29, 2009 elections. Such support for a Chavista-style take-over of a allied democracy was a serious blow to America's standing as a bulwark for freedom and debilitating to its few remaining democratically elected friends in governments in the hemisphere.

JUNE 2009

Obama Administration first invites, then disinvites, Iranian diplomats to July 4 celebrations

Source: Kessler, Glenn, "Iran Envoys Disinvited from July 4 Festivities," *The Washington Post*, 25 June 2009

In late June 2009, the Obama administration announced the withdrawal of previously offered invitations to Iranian diplomats to attend U.S. 4th of July celebrations at its diplomatic posts abroad. Even as graphic scenes of the Iranian regime's brutality flooded the Internet, and despite the fact that the U.S. and Iran have not had diplomatic relations for three decades, Obama's Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had nevertheless authorized the invitations as a way of reaching out to the clerical regime. After no Iranians RSVP'd to the invitations, though, the president apparently got the message and took them back. The embarrassing inci-

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

dent demonstrated a risible ineptitude on the part of the U.S. administration and held it up to international ridicule.

J U N E 2 0 0 9

CIA director Panetta kills program to explore options for assassinating Osama bin Laden

Source: Warrick, Joby. "CIA Assassin Program Was Nearing New Phase; Panetta Pulled Plug After Training Was Proposed" *The Washington Post*, July 13, 2009; Panetta, Leon, "Congress and the CIA: Time to Move On" *The Washington Post*, August 2, 2009.

Looking to throw a sop to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in the hope of mollifying her and ending her jihad against the CIA, Obama's CIA director agreed with some fanfare to terminate an old program aimed at developing options for killing Osama bin Laden. This program never came up with an operational plan, let alone carried one out, mooted the need to notify Congress of the existence of such an activity. Whether or not the program met the legal threshold for reporting (it did not) is not the real issue. The real issue is: Are we safer if the CIA isn't even permitted to *think about* options for killing bin Laden?

July 2009

7 J U L Y 2 0 0 9

During Moscow summit meeting, President Obama declines to raise the issue of human rights, except in very general terms

Sources: Hechtkopf, Kevin, "Text: Obama's Speech in Russia," CBS News. 7 July 2009; Landler, Mark. "Clinton Defends Human Rights Approach." *The New York Times*. 14 December 2009.

Determined to "reset" relations with Russia, President Obama declined in his talks with Russian leaders and with representatives of Russian civil society to cite specific cases of human rights abuse. His deference to his hosts was not reciprocated by the Kremlin, either with respect to apprecia-

bly improved bilateral ties or greater respect for dissidents and other opponents. This episode simply reinforces past experience: the murders of journalists and human rights defenders in Russia can only be addressed effectively with the help of external pressure. At the same time, the state of human rights in Russia has strategic implications. A population that lacks democratic rights and is subject to constant anti-Western propaganda can easily be mobilized against the United States.

8 J U L Y 2 0 0 9

Administration rescinds 'No-Match' immigration regulation

Sources: Office of the Press Secretary. "DHS: Secretary Napolitano Strengthens Employment Verification with Administration's Commitment to E-Verify." Department of Homeland Security. July 8 2009; Miller, Charles M., "No-Match Rescission Leaves Matter in Limbo," *Immigration Employment*. 19 October 2009

This administration rescinded the "No-Match" rule that laid out procedures for employers to follow if they received a "No-Match" letter from the Social Security Administration (SSA) about an employee. According to journalist Charles Miller, the regulation (72 Fed. Reg. 45611-45624 promulgated on Aug. 15, 2007), "had changed the legal obligations of an employer when receiving a no-match letter from the SSA or a notice of suspect documents letter from ICE. The rule had amended the definition of constructive knowledge to include receipt by an employer of a no-match letter from SSA or a notice from the Department of Homeland Security, with a potential finding that the employer had constructive knowledge that it was employing an alien not authorized to work in the United States." As a result of the Obama change, many employers will have no choice but to continue to employ individuals they *know* are illegal.

10 JULY 2009

Obama Gives Iran a September deadline on nuclear program

Source: Dinan, Stephen, "Obama gives Iran deadline on nuclear program," *The Washington Times*, 10 July 2009.

Speaking in Italy in mid-July 2009, President Obama told Iran that it had until the G-20 summit to be held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on 24-25 September to show good faith efforts to halt its nuclear weapons program. This was but the latest in a succession of so-called 'deadlines' issued by this and previous U.S. administrations to the Iranian regime. Regrettably, the president's statement failed to impress either Tehran or the international community. The former ignored it, the latter imposed no appreciable penalties for the mullah's behavior. In the process, U.S. credibility in the international sphere was eroded further.

27 JULY 2009

Politicizing Congressional oversight and subjecting CIA officers to political witch hunts

Source: U.S. House of Representatives Select Committee on Intelligence, press release "Chairman Reyes Statement on Committee Investigation," July 17, 2009.

In another effort to provide political cover for Speaker Pelosi in her self-declared war against the CIA, House Democrats launched an investigation into the aforementioned "program" aimed at neutralizing Osama bin Laden – one studied but never operationalized in any way by the CIA. No one should be surprised that CIA is becoming less agile and more risk-averse under threat of continuing politicization and debilitating investigations. It took decades for the CIA to recover from the investigations of the 1970s – years that the Russians and others used to advantage in undermining pro-Western governments, supporting insurgencies and implanting spies.

28 JULY 2009

U.S. fails to protest when Iraqi forces attack Iranian opposition group

Source: Abouzeid, Rania, "At Tehran's Bidding? Iraq Cracks Down on a Controversial Camp," *Time*, 29 July 2009.

On July 28, armed Iraqi troops launched a brutal assault against the unarmed inhabitants of Camp Ashraf, a northern Iraqi base for the Iranian opposition group, the *Mujahedeen-e Khalq* (MEK). Placed under U.S. security guarantees in 2004 according to provisions of the 4th Geneva Convention, the defenseless group that day suffered six dead and hundreds of wounded in attacks that involved water cannon, pepper spray, nail-studded clubs, and gunfire. The failure of nearby U.S. troops to intervene sent a signal to Tehran that its increasingly cozy relationship with Baghdad would not be opposed by an American administration eager to exit Iraq and open dialogue with the mullahs.

August 2009

6 AUGUST 2009

Secretary of State Clinton voices "regret" that U.S. is "not yet" a Member of the International Criminal Court

Source: MacAskill, Ewen, "US may join international war crimes Court, Clinton Hints," *The Guardian*, 6 August 2009

By declaring her "regret" that the United States is "not yet" a member of the International Criminal Court, Secretary Hillary Clinton is signaling the Obama administration's support for membership – a longstanding goal of transnationalists like her Legal Advisor, Harold Koh. Membership in the ICC would legitimize an international organization that has already shown no regard for national sovereignty, including through its investigations of the United States and Israel

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

(both non-parties) for alleged “war crimes” in Afghanistan and Gaza, respectively.

13 AUGUST 2009

President Obama announces review of U.S. export controls system for dual-use and defense trade items

Sources: The White House Office of the Press Secretary. “[Statement of the Press Secretary on Exchange Controls overhaul](#)”; Gary Locke. “[Remarks at Bureau of Industry and Security Update Conference on Export Controls](#).” US Department of Commerce. 1 October 2009.

The review aims to “update” a system “rooted in the Cold War era of over 50 years ago...to address the threats we face today and the changing economic and technological landscape.” Yet, it is driven largely by unfounded claims that today’s export controls “unnecessarily undercut our companies’ global competitiveness.” Strongly supported by developers and manufacturers of inherently dual-use products and technologies with long records of supplying dangerous products and technologies to America’s adversaries, the review could well loosen controls further and jeopardize national security in return for minimal economic growth and, if any, highly ephemeral job creation.

24 AUGUST 2009

Investigation into conduct of CIA interrogations

Source: Holder, Eric, “[Statement of Attorney General Eric Holder Regarding a Preliminary Review into the Interrogation of Certain Detainees](#).” US Department of Justice. 24 August 2009.

Attorney General Holder Jr. announced that he would after all investigate CIA officers for their conduct of terrorist interrogations even though President Obama promised this would not happen and despite the fact that such techniques – which were employed in good faith pursuant to guidelines laid down by the Justice Department – obtained time-sensitive intelligence on terrorist plans. Now, American intelligence officers have to question every order they are given, wondering whether, even if the order is lawful, they may be punished anyway if the political climate changes.

Inevitably, the risk-takers will be suppressed or leave, and the rest will hesitate for fear of jeopardizing their careers. As a result, new operations that might save lives are being delayed or not pursued, subjected to ever-more lawyers and layers of review.

September 2009

1 SEPTEMBER 2009

Secretary of Defense Gates denies request by House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member to lead Michigan delegation to Gitmo

Source: Gates, Robert. “[Letter to Representative Hoekstra](#).” Office of the Secretary of Defense. 1 September 2009.

When Standish, Michigan was under serious consideration as a destination for terrorist detainees Mr. Obama is determined to transfer from Guantanamo, Rep. Peter Hoekstra (R-Michigan), the Ranking Member on the House Intelligence Committee, requested that certain information about the Gitmo detainees be de-classified, and that he be allowed to lead a delegation of state/local officials to Gitmo. Secretary Gates turned down this request, and stated that the administration would engage state/local officials only *after* the administration had decided where to send Gitmo detainees. By denying this request, the administration was deciding not to inform the affected state and community about the potential consequences of housing Gitmo detainees.

17 SEPTEMBER 2009

Obama Administration abandons Poland and Czech missile defense

Source: Joyner, James, "Obama Abandons Poland and Czech Missile Defense," *Atlantic Council*, 17 September 2009. Accessed online 10 January 2010 at http://www.acus.org/new_atlanticist/obama-abandons-poland-and-czech-missile-defense

President Obama announced the cancellation of the long-range missile defense system that was to be based in Poland and the Czech Republic pursuant to an agreement painstakingly crafted by his predecessor, President George W. Bush and the respective allied governments. In dropping plans to base interceptor missiles in Poland and a radar system in the Czech Republic, Mr. Obama capitulated to Russian protests against the system, apparently in hopes that Moscow would support U.S. calls for stricter sanctions against Iran over its nuclear weapons program and to lubricate negotiation of a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START). The Kremlin was made aware of the decision well in advance; apparently Warsaw and Prague were not. The integrated missile and radar system had been intended to defend against a potential Iranian missile launch. By scrapping it, Obama displayed contempt for America's international commitments, a callous disregard for two of the U.S.'s closest allies, an alarming tendency to buckle in the face of Russian bullying, and finally, a misplaced confidence that the Iranian missile threat is not imminent.

24 SEPTEMBER 2009

Obama declares his intent to move forward on ratification of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)

Source: Senator John Kyl, "Why We need to Test Nuclear Weapons." Opinion Piece in *The Wall Street Journal*. 20 October 2009.

Obama announced at the United Nations that he would press forward with seeking ratification of the CTBT. If ratified, the CTBT would prevent the United States from conducting tests of its nuclear weapons capabilities at a time when the

nuclear arsenal and infrastructure are badly in need of modernization. The resulting lack of faith in the reliability and effectiveness of the American nuclear deterrent would encourage other nations – both adversaries and allies – to pursue their own nuclear weapons programs.

25 SEPTEMBER 2009

The CIA's Center on Climate Change and National Security

Sources: Press office of the Central Intelligence Agency. "CIA Opens Center on Climate Change and National Security." 25 September 2009; Broad, William J., "CIA Is Sharing Data with Scientists." *The New York Times*. 4 January 2010.

With much fanfare, the CIA launched the Center on Climate Change and National Security, supposedly to study "the national security impact of phenomena such as desertification, rising sea levels, population shifts and heightened competition for natural resources." Interestingly, on Jan. 4, 2010, less than two weeks after the CIA failed to prevent the attempted Christmas Day terror attack on a U.S. airliner, the *New York Times* reported that the CIA is using its intelligence resources and satellites to monitor ice in the Arctic. So, rather than using all of its resources and expertise to protect Americans from the very real and present dangers (which include, the immediate threat of Islamic terrorism, proliferation of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, North Korea, China, Russia, etc.), the CIA is diverting taxpayer money to speculative assessments of the hypothetical (if not entirely imaginary) and certainly years-off consequences of putative climate change. Similar diversions of limited resources are reportedly underway in the Pentagon and military services where an "infrastructure" for responding to climate change is now being established.

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

25 SEPTEMBER 2009

President Obama reveals existence of secret underground Iranian enrichment plant

Source: "Iran's Nuclear Program," *The New York Times*, 10 January 2010.

At the G-20 Summit meeting in Pittsburgh, flanked by UK Prime Minister Gordon Brown and French President Nicolas Sarkozy, President Obama revealed what Western intelligence agencies had known and treated as a closely held secret for a number of years: the existence of an underground uranium enrichment facility beneath a well-guarded mountain near the Iranian holy city of Qom. As a practical matter, its small size meant that it could only be used for one purpose: supporting a nuclear weapons program. The next day, the five members of the UN Security Council held talks with Iranian officials during which a tentative agreement was reached for Iran to export most of its enriched uranium for processing abroad. The previous deadline of 25 September was quickly forgotten and a new year-end deadline was set for completion of that accord. By the end of October 2009, however, Iran told the UN's chief inspector that it was rejecting the deal. Certainly by this point, it was beyond obvious that the Iranians were simply jerking the Obama administration around. The evidence was now indisputable that Tehran was flagrantly violating the provisions of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, and was confident that the mullahocracy would be allowed to get away with it. The Obama administration's inability to muster the fortitude to call Iran to account and impose consequences for Tehran's serial abrogation of its commitments and responsibilities have grievously undercut U.S. global credibility and prompted many in the region who have relied on our protection to seek separate peaces with the Iranians or to acquire their own nuclear capabilities.

26 SEPTEMBER 2009

Obama Administration announces it is cutting the number of Border Patrol agents at the US-Mexico border beginning in October 2009

Source: Terence P. Jeffrey. "[Administration Will Cut Border Patrol Deployed on US-Mexico Border.](#)" *CNSNews*, September 26, 2009.

"Even though the Border Patrol now reports that almost 1,300 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border is not under effective control, and the Department of Justice says that vast stretches of the border are 'easily breached,' and the Government Accountability Office has revealed that three persons 'linked to terrorism' and 530 aliens from 'special interest countries' were intercepted at Border Patrol checkpoints last year, the administration is nonetheless now planning to decrease the number of Border Patrol agents deployed on the U.S.-Mexico border."

29 SEPTEMBER 2009

White House transfers to the Commerce Department authority to approve sales to China of missile and space technology

Source: President Barack Obama. "[Memorandum to the Secretary of Commerce concerning delegations of certifications.](#)" *The White House*, September 29, 2009.

The Commerce Department has the responsibility within the U.S. government for promoting exports. Putting it in charge of sensitive missile and space-related dual-use technology export decisions is a classic case of the fox guarding the chicken coop. This move will surely result in further relaxation of export controls and will, in all probability, result in transfers that enhance Chinese military capabilities, especially those relating to missiles. Those controls were enacted after the scandals in the 1990s involving transfers of sensitive space technology to China by Loral and Hughes Electronics Corporation that markedly increased Beijing's ability to threaten the United States and others with its nuclear forces.

30 SEPTEMBER 2009

Obama denies Venezuela's Chavez is national security threat

Source: Oppenheimer, Andres, "Obama's confidence-building moves good – to a Point." *The Miami Herald*. 3 October 2009.

This Administration remained unmoved as Iran and Venezuela announced a nuclear cooperation pact. Dan Restrepo, head of the Latin American desk for the National Security Council pointed out in an interview to a Miami newspaper that "[The president] does not see Venezuela as a challenge to U.S. national security. There is no Cold War [nor] Hot War. Those things belong to the past. We have to look at the present and see how we can work constructively with those countries that are interested in working with us. It may be that not all of them want to do so, but the vast majority of the people and countries in Latin America are interested in doing so." When asked about his thought on Iran-Venezuela nuclear cooperation Restrepo pointed out: "Look, we hope that all countries in the Americas respect international rules, and their international responsibilities regarding nuclear energy." Such statements, against the backdrop of U.S. indifference to the steady progress of the Iranian nuclear weapons program can only be interpreted in Caracas as a green light for its own ambitions in that area.

October 2009

15 OCTOBER 2009

Obama fails to address China's currency manipulations

Sources: Palmer, Doug and Jackie Frank, "Obama, Clinton back Senate trade bill on China currency." *Reuters*. 1 May 2008; Office of International Affairs. "Report to Congress on International Economic and Exchange Rate Policies." US Department of Treasury. 15 April 2009; Office of International Affairs. "Report to Congress on International Economic and Exchange Rate Policies." US Department of Treasury. 15 October 2009.

On May 1, 2008, as a presidential candidate, Barack Obama rightly denounced China's currency manipulation as an "un-acceptable," subsidy-like policy that has devastated American industry. That day, then- Senator Obama also became a cosponsor of strong legislation to combat currency manipulation. Beijing's exchange-rate protectionism has also fueled China's multi-hundred billion dollars-worth of annual trade profits with the United States, and therefore greatly increased the financing available for Beijing's dangerous military buildup. But in his administration's first two congressionally required reports on foreign currency policies, Obama absolved China of these charges. As a result, during his tenure as President, Mr. Obama has enabled China's merchandise trade surplus with the United States to reach more than \$191 billion, and continue to feed China's military buildup.

19 OCTOBER 2009

White House floats Iranian nuclear fuel swap offer

Source: Hiedeh, Farmani "Iran will enrich uranium to 20%: Ahmadinejad," *AFP*, December 2, 2009

The White House announced that it was willing to give Iran all of the 20-percent enriched uranium fabricated nuclear fuel it might need to run its research reactor near Tehran in

Are You Safer?

THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

exchange for 1,200 kilograms of low (3.5 percent) enriched uranium (LEU) gas that Iran had produced at its plant at Natanz. 1,200 kilograms of LEU is roughly the amount Iran would need to re-enrich to higher levels to make its first nuclear bomb. Iran initially rejected the deal, but continues to exploit the United States' willingness to make the offer to justify Iran enriching its uranium to 20 percent, which would bring Iran dramatically closer to having the weapons-grade uranium it needs for its bomb.

27 OCTOBER 2009

Defense Secretary Gates invites General Xu Caihou to the Pentagon

Source: Garamone, Jim. ["U.S. Relations with the People's Republic of China: Gates Asks Xu to Help Stop 'On-Again, Off-Again' Cycle."](#) American Forces Press Services. October 27, 2009.

In a bid to establish better military-to-military ties with the Chinese military, Secretary Gates invited General Xu to tour various American military installations, such as Fort Benning, Offut Air Force Base, Nellis Air Force Base, North Island Naval Air Station, and the headquarters of the U.S. Pacific Command. The Chinese have rarely reciprocated and even more rarely with invitations to comparably sensitive facilities. Consequently, such so-called "exchanges" amount to one-way transfers of information to China's People's Liberation Army and signal a form of kow-towing that only emboldens Chinese ambitions to assert an ever-more dominant position, both regionally and globally.

November 2009

5 NOVEMBER 2009

Obama endorses "media shield" legislation

Source: National Press Photographers Association. ["White House Endorses Federal Shield Law for Journalists."](#) 5 November 2009.

The "media shield" bill prohibits a federal court from forcing a journalist to disclose the identity of a confidential source – even in a situation where national security information has been leaked – unless the government is able to overcome various, significant hurdles. In addition, the bill allows *judges* to determine whether the national interest is better served by disclosing the source's identity or not, a responsibility properly placed pursuant to the Constitution in the executive. By creating a presumption that journalists will not be forced to identify sources, the bill serves to incentivize the leaking of national security information and protect the *leaker* of such information from ever being discovered, let alone punished.

5 NOVEMBER 2009

Senate votes to allow 9/11 masterminds to be tried in federal court in New York City

Source: James Rosen. ["Graham Bill on 9/11 trials defeated."](#) McClatchy Newspapers. 6 November 2009.

The Senate defeated a measure that would have required the 9/11 masterminds to be tried before military commissions only. The defeat of this measure cleared the way for Obama's decision to try the perpetrators in civilian court, where legal procedures serve to weaken the government's case against them and could possibly lead to their release.

6 NOVEMBER 2009

White House signals America's dependence on China

Source: Bush, Richard and Jeffrey Bader. "Obama Goes to Asia: Understanding the President's Trip." The Brookings Institution. November 6, 2009.

The National Security Council's Jeffrey Bader said in a policy statement delivered at the Brookings Institution that China's cooperation on "the great issues of the day" is essential. The Chinese probably read Bader's words as further confirmation that the United States is effectively conceding Beijing's right to exercise a veto in such matters as the Iranian and North Korean nuclear weapons programs. In effect, Bader, on the eve of President Obama's trip to Asia, signaled the administration's perception that it needs China more than China needs the United States.

8 NOVEMBER 2009

Army Chief of Staff, in response to Fort Hood shooting, states that loss of diversity in Army would be "worse" than shooting itself

Source: Tabassum, Zakaria. "General Casey: diversity shouldn't be casualty of Fort Hood," Reuters. November 8, 2009.

General George Casey, the U.S. Army's most senior officer, stated in response to the Fort Hood Shooting carried out by Major Malik Nidal Hassan: "Our diversity, not only in our Army, but in our country, is a strength. And as horrific as this tragedy was, if our diversity becomes a casualty, I think that's worse." This statement demonstrates a failure to understand the nature of the jihadist threat from within the ranks at the Army and to prioritize it appropriately over considerations of political correctness.

9 NOVEMBER 2009

U.S. issued a 'rebuttal' as Iran charges three American hikers with espionage

Source: Healy, Jack and Nazila Fathi, "Iran Accuses U.S. Hikers of Espionage," *New York Times*, 9 November 2009.

In early November 2009, Iran announced espionage charges against three American hikers arrested in the summer of 2009 who had innocently strayed over the Iranian border. The White House and Secretary of State Clinton issued calls for their release, but in the wake of the Saberi case earlier in the year, speculation centered on the possibility that Tehran intended to use the latest U.S. hostages as bargaining chips in nuclear weapons program discussions. Having once capitulated to Iranian demands for the release of a citizen, a weakened Obama administration can expect to face ever-expanding ransom costs in the future, as well as repeat hostage-taking.

12 NOVEMBER 2009

Public dispute between Director of National Intelligence and CIA Director over who manages intelligence relationships abroad

Source: Classified memo by National Security Advisor Jim Jones reported *inter alia* at "Settling an intelligence turf war" *The Washington Post*, November 17, 2009.

In warring memos, the DNI and the Director of the CIA each asserted the right to manage America's relationships with its intelligence partners. Those partners were already confused about who is in charge within the U.S.; now they are confused about who is in charge abroad, further undermining confidence in working with the U.S. and supplying opportunities for adversaries who want to sow mistrust. The White House tried to settle the dispute by memo issued November 12, but foreign services still wonder who they should talk to, or who they should listen to. And the turf wars continue.

Are You Safer? THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

13 NOVEMBER 2009

9/11 detainees—including Khalid Sheikh Mohammad—to be tried in civilian court

Source: [“Holder defends decision to try accused 9/11 terrorists in New York.” CNN. 18 November 2009](#)

By order of Attorney General Holder, the key 9/11 suspects in U.S. custody are being treated like “common criminals” with a right to greater constitutional protections than they would receive in a military trial while the interests of national security take a back seat. Other current and future detainees see their day in court coming, which means (along with the interrogation investigations) that CIA will be embroiled in more public litigation than ever before. Under civilian court procedures, court filings, the “discovery” process and open court proceedings will invariably result in secrets being lost, to the detriment of U.S. security.

17 NOVEMBER 2009

White House announces technical collaboration for China's ARJ21 commuter jet

Source: [Pasztor, Andy and Norihiko Shirouzu. “Chinese Jet Gets Boost from Obama.” The Wall Street Journal. November 17, 2009.](#)

The White House announced it would help China develop a commercial plane and push for its safety certification. At the very least, the administration should not take steps that compromise the safety of the American flying public. At a broader level, Washington should not help the Chinese aviation industry, which will soon compete with America's and inevitably has implications for Beijing's military programs, as well.

18 NOVEMBER 2009

Obama calls Israeli construction in East Jerusalem “dangerous”

Source: [“Obama Calls Israeli Settlement Building in East Jerusalem ‘Dangerous.’” Fox News Online. 18 January 2009.](#)

President Obama's declaration that Israeli construction of 900 apartments to an existing community in East Jerusalem

is “dangerous” for peace efforts represents a lack of understanding of the real reason for the lack of a peace agreement: the fundamental rejection of the Palestinians and their supporters of Israel's right to exist as a sovereign Jewish state. The use of the word “dangerous” in reference to Israeli construction also serves to rationalize Palestinian violence against Israelis. The act of rationalizing Palestinian violence at the expense of Israeli sovereignty undermines the security of our most important ally in the region.

19 NOVEMBER 2009

Department of Homeland Security agrees to audit NSEERS program for tracking potential terrorists

Source: [Press Statement. “Office of Inspector General at DHS to Audit NSEERS at the Request of ADC and Other Major Organizations.” Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee. 18 January 2009](#)

At the request of interest groups such as the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the Department of Homeland Security agreed to audit the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS), a program implemented after 9/11 to enhance monitoring of visa overstays by individuals from countries where terrorism and jihad are prevalent. Agreeing to audit NSEERS constitutes accepting the notion that political correctness, and deflecting accusations of “profiling” or “Islamophobia,” are more important than terror prevention. If the audit leads to the termination of the program, as these interest groups have requested, such termination will create a major vulnerability in monitoring potential terrorists inside the United States.

December 2009

2 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

Obama announces Afghanistan surge—and prompt withdrawal

Source: Stolberg, Sheryl Gay and Helene Cooper, “Obama Adds Troops, but Maps Exit Plan,” *The New York Times*, December 1, 2009.

President Obama announced that he will dispatch 30,000 more U.S. troops to Afghanistan within the next six months and begin withdrawing troops shortly after they are all in place, starting in June 2011. Inherently, the surge will expose U.S. troops to higher levels of risk. That risk has been intensified, however, by Mr. Obama’s decision to reject General McChrystal’s “low risk” strategy, which reportedly called for 60,000 to 80,000 more troops, and even his “medium risk” strategy, which reportedly called for 40,000. There is also concern that the announcement of such a hasty deadline for withdrawal will embolden U.S. enemies and lead them to believe that they can outlast the U.S. mission.

4 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

Administration continues to negotiate a treaty to replace expired START I treaty

Source: Reed, Jason. “Obama, Russia work on soon-to-expire arms treaty.” *Reuters/USA Today*. 4 December 2009.

The Obama administration is working hard to negotiate a treaty that the U.S. does not need and which, by appearing to confirm Russia’s superpower illusions, will make Russia more aggressive rather than less. Russia is unable to maintain its nuclear arsenal and will be compelled to retire a large group of launchers irrespective of whether or not there is a new agreement. Russian military leaders have stated publicly that not a single Russian launcher with remaining service life will be withdrawn under a new treaty. The American cuts, however, will be real. The purpose of the treaty is

not to strengthen U.S. security but to reduce our strategic forces to a level that would make it possible for Russia to preserve strategic parity. It goes almost without saying that this should not be a strategic goal of the U.S.

4 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

End of U.S. on-site inspection activities in Russia

Source: Statement by Ian Kelly, State Department Spokesman at the Daily Press Briefing, Washington, DC, December 4, 2009

One of the most highly valued intelligence sources on Russian missile modernization came from the U.S. presence at the missile assembly site at Votkinsk, Russia, which began in 1988 and continued until December of last year. While negotiations are now underway to replace the START arms control agreement with a new U.S.-Russia accord, the Obama administration decided not to seek an interim agreement that would allow Americans to remain on site. As a result, the intelligence community will be less able to provide insights into Russian nuclear modernization, which – while part of a shrinking of the Kremlin’s strategic forces – continues, to be robust. This stands in sharp contrast with the American deterrent which is, as a practical matter, not being modernized at all.

8 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

President sends Ambassador Bosworth for direct talks with North Korea

Source: Powell, Bill, “US Tries Direct Talks with North Korea,” *Time*, December 8, 2009

In a reversal of previous US policy only to talk with North Korean officials in the context of 6-Party denuclearization talks with China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea, the Obama administration sent Ambassador Bosworth to Pyongyang for direct one-on-one negotiations with North Korean officials. Subsequently, the North Koreans refused to rejoin the 6-party talks to determine how to disarm North

Are You Safer? THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

Korea's nuclear arsenal until the U.S. drops all sanctions against North Korea. The United States has thus been out-manuevered yet again by one of the most repressive, dangerous and poorest regimes on the planet.

1 5 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

President announces intent to transfer Guantanamo detainees to prison in Thomson, IL

Source: Parsons, Christi, "U.S. to buy prison for Guantanamo Bay detainees," *The San Francisco Chronicle*. 15 December, 2009.

As part of his plan to close Guantanamo, President Obama decides to transfer a large segment of the remaining detainee population to a prison in Thomson, Illinois. This will increase the likelihood of a terrorist attack on targets of interest in Illinois, as well as the likelihood that terrorist detainees will be given greater rights both within the prison (enabling them to radicalize other prisoners) and in a courtroom, which will risk the dissemination of sensitive intelligence information – and possibly the release of detainees.

1 6 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

INTERPOL authorized to operate within the U.S. immune from search and seizure

Source: Executive Order 13524, Amending Executive Order 12425 Designating Interpol as a Public International Organization Entitled To Enjoy Certain Privileges, Exemptions, and Immunities. *The White House*. 16 December 2009.

By Obama's order, the "property and assets of [INTERPOL], wherever located and by whomsoever held, shall be immune from search, unless such immunity be expressly waived, and from confiscation." Among other concerns, the risk is that INTERPOL personnel, facilities and activities may be exploited for foreign intelligence operations within the United States, with the physical and logistics infrastructure of a police force – a potential new nightmare for U.S. counterintelligence and the FBI.

1 6 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

New asylum detention policy: foreigners who arrive at a port of entry and are found to have a credible fear will automatically be considered for release into the U.S.

Source: Associated Press. "Feds revising asylum detention policies," *MSNBC*. December 16, 2009.

This administration reversed the longstanding policy to detain aliens who show up at ports-of-entry without proper documentation and request asylum. This will return U.S. ports-of-entry to a situation where thousands of individuals who possess counterfeit documentation – or none at all – request asylum, are simply allowed to enter the United States and then abscond when they are supposed to report for their asylum determination hearing. The detention policy originally was put into place in part because the asylum system had become a known tool for terrorists seeking entry into the country. Under the new policy, terrorists can once again take advantage of our failure to learn the lessons of the past.

1 9 D E C E M B E R 2 0 0 9

Top Obama Aide signals slippage on December 31 deadline for Iranian nuclear weapons program

Source: Malcolm, Andrew, "Obama aide Axelrod fudges Dec. 31 deadline for Iran on nuclear weapons," *The Los Angeles Times*, 20 December 2009.

Appearing on the 19 December 2009 Sunday morning talk show, *ABC's This Week*, Obama administration advisor David Axelrod let it be known that the U.S. had no intention of holding Iran to the 31 December deadline for Iran to respond to the Western plan for it to ship its nuclear fuel abroad for reprocessing. As with myriad earlier "deadlines," this one too was allowed to pass by with absolutely no consequences. The serial failure of the Obama administration to hold Iran to account for repeatedly disregarding an apparently endless procession of meaningless deadlines exposes the U.S. as an enfeebled paper tiger whose word means nothing.

29 DECEMBER 2009

National declassification order

Source: Executive Order 13526. [Classified National Security Information and Accompanying Presidential Memorandum](#). The White House. 29 December 2009.

Obama ordered the federal government to change longstanding practices for protecting the nation's secrets, including a requirement that every record be released eventually. This order will result in the release of more than 400 million pages of Cold War-era records, exposing a wealth of secret data on U.S.-Soviet relations, including the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the fall of the Berlin Wall, diplomacy and espionage that the Russians and other adversaries have been trying to steal for decades. To make the protection of secrets even more difficult, Obama also reversed a decision by President George W. Bush that had allowed the intelligence community to block the release of a specific document.

January 2010

1 JANUARY 2010

Latest Obama deadline for Iran's nuclear program passes without incident

Source: Tobin, Jonathan, ["Obama's Iran deadline gets thrown down the memory hole,"](#) *Commentary Magazine*, 8 January 2010.

A full week after the latest U.S. deadline for an Iranian response on its nuclear weapons program had expired, Secretary of State Clinton explained that the Obama administration really doesn't like the word "deadline" very much. "We've avoided using the term 'deadline' ourselves," said Secretary Clinton. "That's not a term that we have used, because we want to keep the door to dialogue open." At this point, the U.S. has lost all credibility with Iran, its friends and allies, and most importantly, with its adversaries around

the world. The damage done by the Obama administration to U.S. national security is grave and worsening because the entire world now knows that calling America's bluff brings no consequences. The country is entering an extremely dangerous period in terms of its ability to exert influence, project power, or even defend the nation.

5 JANUARY 2010

Entrusting national security secrets to an individual with a proven blatant disregard for the Nation's security

Sources: Snider, L. Britt and Daniel S. Seikaly. ["Improper Handling of Classified Information by John M. Deutch."](#) Office of the Inspector General. 18 February 2000; ["DOD Announces New Defense Science Board Membership,"](#) Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs. 5 January, 2010; [Report Of Investigation Allegations Of Breaches Of Security: Dr. John M. Deutch, Former Deputy Secretary Of Defense And Former Under Secretary Of Defense For Acquisition And Technology.](#) Department Of Defense Office Of The Inspector General. 28 August, 2000; [DDCI Actions Relating to Deutch Investigation, statement by CIA Spokesman Bill Harlow on DDCI Actions Relating to Deutch Investigation.](#) 25 May 2000.

John Deutch, who left office in disgrace after it was learned that he had compromised a treasure trove of the nation's most highly sensitive secrets, was named as a member of the Obama Pentagon's Defense Science Board. Separate IG investigations found that throughout the years he served as Deputy Secretary of Defense and Director of the CIA during the Clinton administration, Deutch routinely copied files marked "top secret" and beyond to his Internet-accessible home computers; he would have a criminal record but for the fact that Clinton pardoned him just before leaving office. While the Obama administration has said it is serious about leakers, who can be expected to take seriously their responsibility to safeguard national security secrets if they give Deutch access to highly classified intelligence and defense weapons programs?

Are You Safer? THE FIRST YEAR OF THE OBAMA PRESIDENCY

7 JANUARY 2010

Obama responds to “Christmas Day bomber” by blaming intelligence but not fixing the problem

Source: “Memorandum from the President to National Security Council. Subject: Attempted Terrorist Attack on December 25, 2009: Intelligence, Screening, and Watchlisting System Corrective Actions.” The White House. January 7 1010.

After action reviews show the intelligence about Umar Farouk Abdulmutallab was collected and it was disseminated. The problem isn’t a failure to “share” or even to “connect the dots;” it is a failure to think and take action. We need an effective warning system from early indications through operations, where the significance of information is recognized and timely communicated to people with clear responsibility and capability for taking action. But that compelling requirement will never be met so long as the Administration treats terrorist activities as crimes instead of war.

13 JANUARY 2010

Obama-appointed Commission on Fort Hood shootings releases report that fails to mention Islamic extremism

Source: Department of Defense Independent Review. “Protecting the Force: Lessons from Fort Hood.” Department of Defense. January 13, 2010.

The report does not mention jihad, Shariah, or any other indication that the shooting massacre at Fort Hood was motivated by jihadist doctrine and belief. The lack of recognition of what motivated this shooting, and others like it, makes it highly unlikely that our government will be able to prevent another such tragedy.

20 JANUARY 2010

White House directs intelligence agencies to lower China as intelligence-collection target

Source: Gertz, Bill, “China Removed as Top Priority for Spies.” *The Washington Times*, January 20, 2010.

This direction to American intelligence agencies may have been the result of China’s lobbying of the White House. In view of China’s extensive and covert efforts to obtain information from American defense and civilian sources, this directive will increase vulnerability to Chinese espionage. The recent revelation of cyberattacks against Google and other American businesses highlights the indefensibility of this decision.