**George W. Bush & the War on Terrorism**

**I. America by 2000**

A. By the late 1990s, the U.S. was changing

1. The economic boom was slowing down & the “_________________________” was about to burst
2. Party politics was increasingly ____________________, especially after the Republican-led impeachment of Clinton
3. New ___________________________ threatened American safety at home & abroad

B. The Election of 2000

1. The election of 2000 was one of the ___________ & most ___________________________ elections in U.S. history
   - Republican nominated conservative Texas governor _______________________________________________
   - Democrats nominated Clinton’s Vice President ________________________________________________
   - Consumer & environmental advocate __________________________________________ ran as an independent

2. The election was so close that which ever candidate won _____________________________ would gain enough electoral votes to win the presidency

3. But, determining which candidate won in Florida was ____________________________ due to voting irregularities; the state Supreme Court ordered a __________________ of ballots in some districts

4. In December 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in a 5-4 decision to ______________________________________________& Bush was declared the _______________________ of the election

**II. The Presidency of George Bush**

A. In his first year, Bush worked with Congress to:

1. Create a 1.35 trillion dollar _________________________
2. Reform ______________________ through the No Child Left Behind Act

B. September 11, 2001

1. Everything changed on September 11, 2001 when a _____________________ terrorist plot led to the ____________________ of 4 airplanes & attacks on the World Trade Center & the Pentagon

2. after 9/11, President Bush declared a “______________________________________________________”

C. The War on Terrorism

1. Answer these questions from the video “The War on Terrorism”
   - Name 1 (of the 3) motivations of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda for the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks
   - What was the connection between the Taliban in Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden’s al-Qaeda terrorist network?
   - Name 1 of the steps the U.S. government took to fight terrorism at home after the 9/11 attacks
   - Name 1 reason for the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003
   - Describe the “hornet’s nest” analogy regarding the U.S. response to fighting al-Qaeda

2. Domestic changes in response to 9/11  *(Describe each during class discussion)*
   - Department of Homeland Security
   - Transportation Security Administration
   - Patriot Act

3. Foreign policy in response to 9/11  *(Describe each during class discussion)*
   - War in Afghanistan (2001-present): Osama bin Laden & al Qaeda; Taliban government
   - George W Bush names Iran, Iraq, & North Korea an “Axis of Evil”
   - War in Iraq (2003-present)
Are We Winning the Global War on Terror?

Introduction: In October 2003, seven months after the United States invaded Iraq, Donald Rumsfeld, the Secretary of Defense, wrote a memo to four of his subordinates. In his memo he asked his colleagues to consider a number of questions he had about the “Global War on Terror.” Read the memo below, and answer the questions that follow with your partner. Note that DoD means Department of Defense and USG means United States Government.

1. Highlight or underline the questions in Secretary Rumsfeld’s memo that you think are most compelling or interesting. Discuss with your partner why these questions interested you.

2. Why might Secretary Rumsfeld have written this memo at this time?

3. With your partner, consider the first question in Secretary Rumsfeld’s memo: “Are we winning or losing the Global War on Terror?” Below, list the types of information you would need in order to decide whether the United States was winning the war on terror. For instance, would you need to know how many terrorist incidents had occurred in the last few years? Or how many people in poverty-stricken areas had joined extremist groups?

4. Rumsfeld asks at the end of his memo, “What else should we be considering?” What do you think? Are there questions Rumsfeld doesn’t ask that he should? Which ones?

5. Secretary Rumsfeld calls the struggle against terrorism a “Global War on Terror.” Is this the right name or title for this struggle? How else could it be described?
TO:       Gen. Dick Myers  
          Paul Wolfowitz  
          Gen. Pete Pace  
          Doug Feith
FROM:    Donald Rumsfeld
SUBJECT: Global War on Terrorism

The questions I posed to combatant commanders this week were: Are we winning or losing the Global War on Terror? Is DoD changing fast enough to deal with the new 21st century security environment? Can a big institution change fast enough? Is the USG changing fast enough?

DoD has been organized, trained and equipped to fight big armies, navies and air forces. It is not possible to change DoD fast enough to successfully fight the global war on terror; an alternative might be to try to fashion a new institution, either within DoD or elsewhere-one that seamlessly focuses the capabilities of several departments and agencies on this key problem.

With respect to global terrorism, the record since September 11th seems to be:
- We are having mixed results with Al Qaida, although we have put considerable pressure on them-nonetheless, a great many remain at large.
- USG has made reasonable progress in capturing or killing the top 55 Iraqis.
- USG has made somewhat slower progress tracking down the Taliban Omar, Hekmatyar, etc.
- With respect to the Ansar Al-Islam, we are just getting started.

Have we fashioned the right mix of rewards, amnesty, protection, and confidence in the US?

Does DoD need to think through new ways to organize, train, equip and focus to deal with the global war on terror?

Are the changes we have and are making too modest and incremental? My impression is that we have not yet made truly bold moves, although we have made many sensible, logical moves in the right direction, but are they enough?

Today we lack metrics to know if we are winning or losing the global war on terror. Are we capturing, killing or deterring and dissuading more terrorists every day than the madrassas and the radical clerics are recruiting, training and deploying against us?

Does the US need to fashion a broad, integrated plan to stop the next generation of terrorists? The US is putting relatively little effort into a long-range plan, but we are putting a great deal of effort into trying to stop terrorists. The cost-benefit ratio is against us! Our cost is billions against the terrorists' costs of millions.

Do we need a new organization?  
How do we stop those who are financing the radical madrassa schools?  
Is our current situation such that "the harder we work, the behinder we get"?

It is pretty clear that the coalition can win in Afghanistan and Iraq in one way or another, but it will be a long, hard slog.

Does CIA need a new finding?

Should we create a private foundation to entice radical madrassas to a more moderate course?

What else should we be considering?

Please be prepared to discuss this at our meeting on Saturday or Monday.

Thanks.
Terrorism: How Should We Respond?

OVERVIEW: What follows is a framework of policy “Options” that frame the current debate in the United States concerning terrorism. They are designed to help you think about a range of possible policy options and the ramifications of each. The four options provided are not intended as a menu of choices. Rather, they are framed in stark terms to highlight very different policy approaches. Each alternative includes a set of policies concerning terrorism, some arguments in support of the position, and some criticisms of it. These are designed to help you think carefully about the trade-offs of each. After you have considered each of the options presented, think about your concerns and values and deliberate with your peers on the strengths and challenges of each of the options presented. Then you are encouraged to develop your own Option 5, an option that reflects your own views and concerns. You may want to borrow heavily from one of the options presented, combine ideas from several, or take a new approach altogether.

Option 1: Direct an Expanded Assault on Terrorism

The United States cannot tolerate acts of terrorism, those who perpetrate them, or those nations who harbor terrorists. As the sole remaining superpower, we have no choice but to take on the job of rooting out terrorism wherever it exists. It is our responsibility and duty to protect ourselves and make the world safe from terrorists. The war on terrorism is a worldwide struggle and we must move forward with a worldwide offensive to combat it until all who threaten peace and security are destroyed. Although it is helpful to have the cooperation of other nations, we must be prepared to fight terrorism-alone if necessary—wherever and whenever it threatens. Nothing less than our own freedom is at stake.

What should we do?

- We should take the war on terrorism to any nation that harbors international terrorists.
- We should devote more of our resources to our military forces.
- We should increase our intelligence capacity.
- International agreements and treaties, like the Geneva Conventions, should not be allowed to hinder our pursuit of terrorists.
- We should encourage and work with any indigenous forces willing to fight a terrorist group and the government that supports it.

Supporting Arguments

- Acting alone when necessary avoids the difficulties that arise from seeking cooperation with other nations that have different political interests and constraints.
- The only way to avert imminent threats to our security is to act preemptively.
- By engaging indigenous forces to fight terrorist groups and their government sponsors, as we did in Afghanistan, we can save American lives.
- Being free of the bureaucratic and political constraints of multinational decision making will allow us to respond more quickly where and when we need to.

Concerns and Tradeoffs

- As the U.S. expands the war on terrorism under its own leadership and on its own terms, anti-American sentiment in other countries will only increase, fueling further terrorism.
- It will require the help of many nations to break up the decentralized network of terrorist cells that currently exists around the world. If we act without regard for international law, we will lose international support.
- If the U.S. takes a go-it-alone approach to defining and rooting out terrorism around the world, flexing U.S. military might unilaterally, we will isolate ourselves from the international community.
- Getting involved with indigenous forces may be expedient at the outset but the risk is too great that, after the victory, we will be dragged into supporting and protecting groups that we really do not approve of or that we cannot trust.
- Al Qaeda is the central threat to U.S. security. We can’t afford to waste our resources going after countries that don’t pose an immediate threat to the United States.
- This response fails to address the underlying causes of terrorism, including a deep-seated resentment of the United States, and will instead only lead to a continuing cycle of violence and more deaths of innocent people.
- Military action overseas diverts resources needed for protection here at home.
- Using our military might as a response to terrorism is bound to result in the deaths of innocent civilians. Our country must respond to terrorism in ways that preserve our national ethics and democratic traditions.

Option 2: Support UN Leadership to Fight Terrorism

Terrorism is a global, not a national, problem. Today our security and the security of the rest of the civilized world depend upon our ability to work together to address this universal threat. We must recognize the UN as the entity with the legitimacy to develop and maintain a long-term, truly international effort to control and eventually wipe out terrorism worldwide. We must play a leadership role in strengthening the effectiveness of the UN on security matters and offer our military, intelligence, and economic support to a UN-led effort to eradicate terrorist cells wherever they are found. We must stand with the world community against lawless terror.

What should we do?

- We should lead efforts to strengthen the hand of the UN on security matters. This includes taking steps to turn over leadership in post-war Iraq to the UN.
- We should debate any response to future terrorist acts against the United States before the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council and abide by the Council’s decisions.
- We should become a member of the International Criminal Court and prosecute international terrorists there.
- We should carefully follow all existing treaties (like the Geneva Conventions), and we should work with the UN to strengthen the conventions limiting nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

Supporting Arguments

- International cooperation brings together the financial, diplomatic, and intelligence tools necessary to address international terrorism.
- Relations with our traditional allies were severely strained when we initiated the war with Iraq without UN approval. We cannot afford to isolate ourselves further from the international community.
- Cooperating as a partner with other nations through the UN will create a truly international response to terrorism, one that reflects the interests and needs of all of the international community, and denies hiding places to terrorists anywhere.
- The UN is only as strong as its member states. In order to make the UN effective as an international organization it must have the full support of the United States.
- The members of the international community will not continue to collaborate unless the decision-making takes all perspectives and interests into account. This will only happen if leadership is shared.

Concerns and Tradeoffs

- When U.S. interests are threatened—here or abroad—we have a right to do what is necessary to defend ourselves, with or without the support of other nations and international organizations.
- Any international coalition will be ineffective without strong U.S. leadership. For that leadership to be effective, we must not be constrained by others in either the nature or the timing of our response.
- The UN already has conventions prohibiting terrorism and biological weapons and has been unable to enforce them. Why will the UN be any more effective now?
- The UN is too slow, too weak, and too indecisive to make any real difference. Giving the institution more power is at best a long-term proposition. It won’t do anything for the terrorist threat today.
- While an international effort may be necessary to correctly identify the perpetrators of terrorism and bring them to justice, terrorism will not end until we address its root causes.
- Accommodating other nations’ interests in a UN campaign against international terrorism will lead us to compromise our nation’s values and force us to support positions abroad that we do not agree with.
- If we pledge to join with the UN in an all-out campaign against international terrorism, we may be forced to spend our own resources on international initiatives that we may not fully approve of at the expense of defending ourselves at home.
Option 3: Defend Our Homeland
The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001 brought a new message to Americans. We have been attacked on our own homeland, and we feel a vulnerability not felt in more than fifty years. Our high-profile foreign policy programs have only bred resentment against us and made us enemies who are intent on doing us harm. The time has come to lower our foreign policy profile, get ourselves out of the sights of terrorists, and build up our national defenses. While civil liberties are important to Americans, we must recognize that we are in a new world. The government must be allowed to take new steps to protect our security.

What should we do?
- We should scale back our foreign involvement by cutting foreign aid programs and reducing our military presence abroad—especially in the Middle East.
- We should build up our intelligence capacity with a focus on understanding the threats that face us here at home.
- We should launch a coordinated national effort to develop defenses against the new threats that face us—biological, chemical, or nuclear attacks.
- We should establish a national identity card, tighten immigration laws, closely watch high-risk ethnic groups, and allow broader monitoring of communications in order to keep tabs on potential terrorists.

Supporting Arguments
- We live in a world where a small handful of angry individuals can wreak havoc using a small amount of weapons-grade biological or chemical material or a “dirty bomb” in a suitcase. Being prepared for such attacks will save American lives.
- By limiting any response only to those who directly threaten us, we will avoid needlessly drawing the wrath of a wider circle of terrorist organizations.
- Taking sides in the battles of other nations (such as Israel’s struggles with Hezbollah) only increases our own vulnerability by drawing the attention of a wider circle of terrorists. The less we are involved in the affairs of other nations, the more secure we will be.
- Resources saved from international involvement can be redirected to promote enhanced security at home.

Concerns and Tradeoffs
- Terrorism is globalized. It will be impossible to get a full picture of the terrorist threats facing us if we do not bring our intelligence resources together with those of the rest of the world. That integration of intelligence capacity will not happen if we withdraw from the international community.
- Withdrawing from the international community will not protect us from possible attack. As long as there are haves and have-nots in the world, we will remain a target for terrorism. There is nowhere to hide.
- As we have already seen, the United States cannot defend itself against all possible means that terrorists have at their disposal. Our only practical and moral choice is to address the root causes of international terrorism.
- A determination to address our vulnerability to international terrorism solely with civil defense measures at home will inevitably lead to compromising the civil liberties on which our nation was founded. At that point, what are we protecting?
- The threats to our security are not only here at home. We must be prepared to act preemptively in other regions of the world to stop attacks before they happen.
- The terrorist threat is everywhere. It is better to fight terrorism on foreign soil than to have it come again to our own shores.
- If we are going to ensure the continuing flow of oil from the Middle East, we must maintain our military presence in the region. We cannot assume that the international community will do this for us.

Option 4: Address the Underlying Causes of Terrorism
Terrorism is a crime against humanity and cannot be tolerated. However, further military action will only perpetuate the cycle of violence. We must abandon any plans for further military action and join with others to address the deeper issues underlying terrorism. Terrorism feeds on the frustrations of some of the world’s most disadvantaged peoples. We must join with the developed world to devote our attention and our resources to launching a targeted “Marshall Plan” that addresses the underlying causes of terrorism. We must also examine our own policies in many parts of the world to see that we are not inflaming long-standing local and regional conflicts, fueling discontent, and creating a breeding ground for anti-American sentiment.

What should we do?
- We should provide more resources in support of the UN’s reconstruction efforts in Afghanistan. We should end our military operation in Iraq, turn control of the reconstruction effort over to the UN, and provide whatever aid is necessary to ensure a successful transition to self-rule and a peacetime economy in Iraq.
- We should refocus our funding priorities to improve the quality of life of disadvantaged populations around the world.
- We should work for just resolutions to long-term political conflicts (such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict) that provide breeding grounds for terrorism.
- We should end our support of regimes that do not support human rights and democratic principles, and affirm our commitment to the Geneva Conventions and international law.

Supporting Arguments
- If we do not address the underlying causes of terrorism—including poverty, injustice, powerlessness, hatred, and in some cases U.S. policy—we risk feeding anti-American rage and creating new recruits to terrorist networks. We have no choice.
- Taking a leadership role in addressing the humanitarian needs of populations in failing states will reduce animosity toward the United States. This is not only a humanitarian issue; it has become a security issue as well.
- In order to be a credible force in addressing terrorism, we must demonstrate that we understand the causes of terrorism and are committed to taking action to address them.
- By addressing the underlying causes of terrorism, we will be able to avoid putting our civil liberties at risk from repressive homeland security measures.

Concerns and Tradeoffs
- Addressing the underlying causes of terrorism will take time. Meanwhile we remain vulnerable to more terrorist attacks. Homeland security can only do so much. We have to act now to stop these terrorist attacks at their source.
- Neither the United States nor the international community has the resources to address all of the underlying causes of terrorism.
- We cannot afford to redirect so much of our budget to development efforts overseas at a time when those resources are needed to build up our defenses here at home.
- If we focus our efforts on long-term solutions, we will be allowing terrorists to commit horrible crimes without immediate consequences. This will invite additional attacks both at home and abroad.
- Terrorists are angry people who hate the United States and the West for ideological and political reasons. The origins of terrorism have little to do with perceived economic and social injustice.
- There will always be hatred. There will always be violence. No amount of foreign aid will change this. We have no real control over anything but our own security.

Option 5: Your Policy Option
America & the World: The Challenges Ahead
By Patricia Smith; The New York Times Upfront, Vol. 142, January 18, 2010

As we head toward a new decade, President Obama and the nation face a wide range of challenges around the globe

CHINA
How the United States and China work together, compete economically, and use their diplomatic and military influence around the world will all play a critical role in shaping the most important international relationship of the 21st century. China is now America’s second-largest trading partner (after Canada), and its exports fill American store shelves; about 80 percent of the goods sold at Wal-Mart are made in China. But many Americans believe China doesn’t play by the rules when it comes to trade, and they fear that thousands more U.S. jobs will be lost to China, which has a huge, low-wage workforce. Such fears put pressure on Washington to at least consider protectionist measures.

As China becomes a more powerful global player, it is expected to overtake Japan this year and become the world’s second-largest economy, after the U.S. The U.S. will also need Beijing’s help in dealing with nuclear threats in North Korea and Iran. The U.S.-China relationship is complicated by tensions over Tibet, Taiwan, human rights, China’s rigid controls on the Internet and free speech, and China’s role as the chief financier of U.S. debt. When President Obama visited in November, his remarks on one of the key issues, free speech, created a stir. "I have a lot of critics in the United States who can say all kinds of things about me," he said. "I actually think that makes our democracy stronger, and it makes me a better leader because it forces me to hear opinions that I don’t want to hear."

CLIMATE CHANGE
Climate change, also known as global warming, is one of the most complicated and controversial problems facing the world today. Agreeing on a treaty to address the problem was the goal of last month’s meeting of 200 nations in Copenhagen. Most scientists say that failure to curb the greenhouse gases that are warming the planet will at some point have disastrous consequences. For example, melting arctic and antarctic ice sheets could raise sea levels and lead to widespread coastal flooding. Melting glaciers, especially in the Himalayas, could jeopardize water supplies for billions of people in Asia. But the enormous amount of money required to address these issues, the impact of any greenhouse gas restrictions on an already-shaky world economy, and disagreement over which measures make the most sense is making it even harder to take action.

The U.S. is currently the second-largest emitter of greenhouse gases, after China. The Obama administration has been pushing a cap-and-trade system to limit greenhouse gas emissions, but so far the measure is stalled in the Senate.

AFGHANISTAN & IRAQ
As the U.S. winds down its military presence in Iraq, it is ramping up its involvement in Afghanistan. Last June, U.S. forces withdrew from Iraqi cities, and President Obama has said the U.S. will withdraw its combat forces, most of the 115,000 troops currently there, by August, and all remaining troops by December 2011. Since the U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq and ousted Saddam Hussein in 2003, more than 4,300 U.S. troops have been killed in Iraq, thousands more have been injured, and tens of thousands of Iraqi civilians have died.

Violence in Iraq, including U.S. casualties, has significantly declined since former President Bush sent an additional 20,000 troops to Iraq in early 2007. But the situation in Afghanistan, where the U.S. and its allies have been fighting since 2001, has been deteriorating. President Obama announced plans in December to send another 30,000 U.S. troops to join the 68,000 already there. Obama has long maintained that Afghanistan, where Al Qaeda planned the 9/11 attacks, and not Iraq, is the front line in the war against terrorism, and that since the ouster of the Taliban in late 2001, the war there has not been given the attention and resources it requires.

The biggest fear is that Afghanistan, where more than 900 U.S. troops have been killed, may be an even tougher challenge than Iraq, particularly with neighboring Pakistan providing sanctuary for insurgents. The Afghan government of President Hamid Karzai, who was returned to office in a disputed election in August, is widely considered corrupt and ineffective. The U.S. doesn’t want the Taliban, which imposed its radical version of Islam on Afghanistan and gave Al Qaeda sanctuary when it ruled the country from 1996 to 2001, to regain control. The real question is whether the Afghan government will be able to take over after U.S. and NATO troops leave, starting in 2011.

NUCLEAR THREATS
One of the biggest challenges facing the Obama administration is the possibility of Iran and North Korea, both autocratic regimes hostile to the U.S., becoming nuclear powers. Iran has been at odds with the U.S. since the 1979 Islamic revolution, but relations have become more tense in recent years. Iran’s hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has threatened to “wipe Israel off the map,” and Iran supports Hamas and Hezbollah, radical Muslim groups that the U.S. considers terrorist organizations.

But the greatest concern is Iran’s nuclear program, which has been condemned by the United Nations and the international community. While Iran claims its nuclear efforts are for peaceful purposes, U.S. officials say Iran is trying to develop a nuclear weapon, and that it may be close to achieving that goal. In September, Iran test-fired missiles with sufficient range to strike Israel, American
military bases in the Middle East, and parts of Europe. To prevent that, the Obama administration is working with U.S. allies and the United Nations to assemble a package of tougher economic sanctions against Iran, including a cut-off of foreign investment in its critical oil and gas industry.

The challenge with North Korea, one of the world's most isolated, repressive, and economically stunted nations, could be even tougher. Four years ago, North Korea exploded its first nuclear weapon, so the Obama administration's task is to lure North Korea back to negotiations with South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the U.S., and ultimately to persuade the country to give up its nuclear arms. Further complicating matters, North Korea's autocratic ruler, Kim Jong II, may be in poor health, and a power struggle over his successor could be brewing. That also raises questions about who's actually in control of the country's nuclear program and the safety of the thousands of U.S. troops who have been stationed on the dividing line between Communist North Korea and South Korea since the end of the Korean War in 1953. The U.S. and the international community have been trying to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons with promises of desperately needed economic aid. Despite these gestures, North Korea has defiantly conducted several missile tests in the last few months.

Another issue of grave concern in Asia is the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. As Pakistan's increasingly fragile government battles an insurgency by Islamic militants along the border with Afghanistan, there are fears that Al Qaeda or the Taliban could get their hands on Pakistan's nuclear weapons, and use them to attack the West. Pakistan's leaders insist the weapons are safe, but American officials aren't so sure.

THE MIDDLE EAST
The prospects for peace in this war-torn region are cloudy at best: Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, is skeptical of the chances for peace with the Palestinians, and the Palestinian leadership is sharply divided, both geographically and politically. The more moderate Palestinian Authority, led by President Mahmoud Abbas, oversees the West Bank. But Gaza is controlled by Hamas, a radical Muslim group responsible for suicide bombings in Israel and considered a terrorist organization by the U.S. and the European Union.

Israel took control of the West Bank and Gaza during the Six-Day War in 1967. When Israel withdrew its troops and settlers from Gaza in 2005, Hamas began firing rockets at, and killing, civilians in Israel. Israel responded with a three-week offensive that began in December 2008 to stop the rocket fire, attacking Hamas targets and Gaza's infrastructure, and killing 1,300 Palestinians.

The U.S. has long supported a two-state solution in which Israel would exist alongside a Palestinian state in most of the West Bank and Gaza. The key issues to be resolved include what to do about Israeli settlements in the West Bank, Palestinian refugees, and the status of Jerusalem, which both Israelis and Palestinians claim as their capital. "Everyone is running around in circles trying to rebuild this process, to find some way to start it up again," a senior Israeli official says. "No one knows if it is possible."

TERRORISM
Since the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, there hasn't been another terrorist attack in the U.S., but several top Al Qaeda figures remain at large, including its leader, Osama bin Laden, who is believed to be hiding in the lawless region along the border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Today, there are an untold number of other terrorist groups, not all with connected with Al Qaeda, who are bent on targeting Westerners, and Americans in particular.

To counter these threats, Washington has spent billions improving U.S. security, everything from more extensive airport screenings to beefing up the capabilities of the F.B.I at home and the U.S. intelligence agencies that operate abroad. President Obama has also been trying to improve America's image in the Muslim world. That's one of the reasons he's closing the Guantánamo prison for terror suspects, which Obama says served as a recruiting tool for terrorist groups. That decision led to the controversial announcement in November that 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed will be put on trial in federal court in New York.

RUSSIA
In the last decade, Russia has become increasingly assertive in its relationship with the U.S. and the world. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, a third of its empire broke away. A smaller, economically devastated Russia was in the 1990s unable to play the major role on the world stage it had when the Soviet Union shared superpower status with the U.S. There was little Russia could do as its former republics and Eastern European satellites grew closer to the U.S. and Europe.

But in the last decade, Russia's economy boomed, and oil revenues soared with the price of oil. (Russia is the world's second-largest oil producer, after Saudi Arabia.) Feeling confident, Russia began acting more assertively on the world stage. The recession, which has hit Russia hard, hasn't yet dampened its bluster. At home Russia has become increasingly autocratic. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin relinquished the presidency in 2008 to Dmitri Medvedev, but Putin is still widely believed to be the real power behind the scenes.

Obama needs Russia's cooperation in two key areas: Afghanistan, where the Soviet Union fought a devastating and unsuccessful war from 1979 to 1989, and Iran. "For Russia, Iran is a very good bargaining chip," says Vladimir Sotnikov of the Center for International Security in Moscow. "And that is why, for now, I don't think that Russia is going to be ready to wholly support major new sanctions."