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President Barack Hussein Obama
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

Congratulations on your second term election which continues the hope and aspirations of the entire country, particularly the younger generation which have never before felt the need for a ray of fresh air to reinforce their confidence in the future of America during these times of utter despair.

It is in light of the above context that I would like to very respectfully—yet honestly—express and share my views on the current state of American Foreign Policy along with—again, respectfully—diverging opinions by exercising the greatest American heritage of free speech, with your administration's conduct of foreign policy. Pertinently aware of your demanding schedule, I am delineating my views to: first the current state of U.S. Foreign Policy; second, the influencing yet neglected elements challenging the U.S. Foreign Policy on the horizon; and third, my humble views of the direction the U.S. should be heading.

The Current State of Foreign Policy: There are many ways and angles that can eloquently, academically, or in a policy paper manner analyze and explain the current state of affairs. However, in a nut shell, the overall U.S. policy that must be implemented through sufficient tools and efficient channels is running thin--very thin--quantitatively as well as--again very respectfully--qualitatively. Either because of the bad to inappropriate policies or the faces representing the policies, i.e., the policy makers, implementers, and/or messengers, or quite simply, due to the extremely huge and oversized structural nature of the American Foreign Policy machinery which has not been overhauled or streamlined since after the Second World War, and certainly not questioned after the fall of communism in a positive, fruitful bearing way. Thus, almost every intended foreign policy decisions--not covert operation, which I will get to shortly, and is not foreign policy—continuously miss their target, if there is one.

Briefly, the U.S. foreign policy has, and continues to drain the country of valuable resources, ending as **half measures** and absolutely nothing satisfactory to show for to either domestic audience, allies, and still less to the amusement of adversary and U.S. enemies. Put it another way, the U.S. foreign policy has lacked any sense of **realism** or **direction** and as the Texan expression goes, the U.S. is now all hat and no cattle—certainly not healthy, valuable, and marketable ones. The metaphor of all bark and no bite has also become a reality. A quick glance at some of the hot spots—relevant and important to U.S. national security shows nothing promising on the horizon as a realistically implementable, long-term U.S. foreign policy plan.

The following is just a short list of the challenges and short-sighted actions, not policy, in the real grandeur scene of the world that are currently or eventually volatile spots for U.S. National Security interests.

Middle East—North Africa: Because of the inherently adverse and neglected socio-political and economic problems along with literally corrupt, self-serving, and short-sighted “leadership/elite” in these countries, the entire region has turned into a chaotic dilemma. The U.S. response has been simply to irrationally and emotionally guide its efforts **against** the status-quo--which America has supported for decades by unwisely and haphazardly arming the “**Opposition**”--without the least knowledge of their composition and still amazingly less concern for its consequences. Obviously, the U.S. foreign policy has not learned anything from either the Iraq or Afghanistan experience. These two countries have already been lost to the influences of U.S. adversaries. Afghanistan, its leadership, along with President Kharzai--actually only and barely the Mayor of Kabul--with his American bodyguards, will be living in either London, the U.S., Dubai, or Saudi, Arabia—leaving the country once again in the hands of the same forces as before the U.S. invasion, with Pakistan and Iran gladly playing the power broker--for a fee, of course. The question, of course, is where the Saudi elite will be fleeing when their turn comes.

The rest of the U.S. “allies” too, like Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Yeman are also sitting on a powder keg that has been brewing over the last few years without any real U.S. policy other than insisting--in their case--to keep the status-quo by being on the wrong side of the history and eventually paying even a higher price for such miscalculation and unrealism and by being forced into the same kind of “Opposition” policy mess that we have witnessed in the aftermath of “Arab Spring” across the region. Finally, Egypt, a past solid pillar of Middle East peace has spiralled into chaos with its new Muslim Brotherhood President acting as only the Islamist President rather than the Egyptian people. His recent preposterous comment against the Jews calling them **publicly** apes, pigs, and blood-sucking was not only below the office he is occupying—but also shows his lack of any leadership or control during these times of crisis in the Middle East. Even more disturbing, Mr. President, was the lack of any vehement response from the United States in objecting to such foul and unacceptable language—publicly or privately.

Africa: The spread of fanaticism and Islamist fundamentalist in Northern and other parts of Africa is yet another example of a neglected area of U.S. foreign policy whereby the only remedy has been too thin and regrettably a replica of what has **not** worked in Afghanistan, i.e., the training and build up of the local “military forces.” Furthermore, the response is only a drop in the bucket that does not remedy the underlying socioeconomic and political problems in this continent, perpetuated for such a long time by the undeniable complicities of Western Multinationals and the respective corrupt elites of the countries they have exploited, i.e., a vicious circle.

China, North Korea, South Korea. And South East Asia: The short reflection can only be that the U.S. response to a rising China has been to demonstrate limited muscle and a toothless diplomacy--as many continue to doubt U.S. resolve in the aftermath of Iraq and Afghanistan experience and still its strategic wisdom. The failed U.S. strategic

policy, naively conceived by your predecessors' administrations had been an "imaginary" alliance with India as a counterweight to China. But this has backfired as India, in its own self-interest, has resisted playing puppet to U.S. goals and been only glad to be baptized by the U.S. for its nuclear program and only interested in an economic partnership giving lip service to U.S. national security concerns. Furthermore, China has cunningly used North Korea to its own advantageous strategic end and North Korea continues to set a global example of defiance to a toothless America; while adding more strategic, financial, and politico-military cost—not to mention credibility gap—to the U.S. global policy.

The Old Continent: As for Europe, the grass root European support of any and all American fantasy conceived foreign policy has completely disappeared and is non-existent. Specially with the ongoing economic crisis that still looms over the Old Continent. Furthermore, the very sad news is that as the recent events in Mali have confirmed, once again, NATO is really and ONLY the U.S.—politically, financially, and most importantly, militarily.

The Neglected, Yet Challenging Elements for U.S. Foreign Policy: Geography, Demography, and Technology

Mr. President, a combination of these very crucial elements are at the **root cause of a misplaced** U.S. policy that has failed to properly take into account or at best has minimized the role of geography, demography, and technology within the calculus of U.S. foreign policy posture.

Geography: Briefly, I urge you to read the very powerful and pertinent *The Revenge of Geography* by Robert D. Kaplan who captures brilliantly the power of natural as opposed to artificial man attributed boundaries in the destiny of nations and--the **strategic coefficient** it grants or denies policy makers

Demography: There is no denying that numbers count. Therefore, no power, not even that of the United States, can subdue any more countries that were previously less populated and let's face it, did not count (or does not **even now** count) from the humanistic or human factor point of view by the Western or U.S. foreign policy makers. The Iraq, Afghanistan experience should be a very simple, yet painful reminder of how geography and demography are powerful combinations not to be taken lightly. Yet, sadly, these two factors have been completely absent from all recent U.S. foreign policy formulations.

Technology: The bitter truth has left no doubt that there is no longer any significant gap between the Western conventional advantage and the low-cost yet extremely effective response by the adversaries that challenges any American upper hand that may have existed. This has and will continue to increase both the financial and humanly costs to American conventional strategy.

Foreign Policy, Conventional Military Tool, and the Ultimate Danger: In the absence of a realistic, coherent, and well-planned foreign policy, the blind use of force void of proper strategy instead of any diplomatic solution has become the only U.S.

foreign policy global interface. The cost to the United States of any future conventional conflict can be extremely heavy surpassing that of Afghanistan and/or Iraq. **In such a frustrating situation, when the U.S. can even drastically lose militarily and strategically,** “The Boys from the Pentagon” as a true American hero, not a flag waving character General Dwight A. Eisenhower called them can quite easily and without exaggeration recommend and resort to the use of nuclear arsenal. This, Mr. President, is a real and ultimate danger in the growing environment that continuously chips away and reduces any U.S. conventional military supremacy that may have existed so far, either qualitatively or quantitatively. But unfortunately, and counting the Iraq, Afghanistan conflict, since **1798** the United States has been engaged in over 200 declared and non-declared wars. President Bush once declared America’s addiction to oil and by the same token, armed conflict has been engraved since the inception of the republic as another major addiction.

Sadly, as most historians would confirm---such as the ones you recently invited to the White House-- the majority of these wars have been absolutely unjust. All you need to do is to read the Latin/Central American history and their account of American aggressions.

The Policy Makers, Planners, and Implementators: Even the best and optimally realistic foreign policy on paper needs careful planning, coordination, and—above all—competent implementators and managers. In short, it must be a tightly run “Ship” with the greatest possible scrutiny—from top to bottom. Unfortunately, Mr. President, I do not see anything close to this prescription—if you subscribe to it. Since the time of Henry Kissinger, again and respectfully, through Secretary of State Hillary Clinton’s term included, the media and the establishment keeps self-congratulating itself on such outstanding American foreign policy formulators without asking the pertinent question that: If such exceptional people have run U.S. foreign policy, why is it in such a dire and catastrophic state that has continuously deteriorated to the current state? I am enclosing a commentary I sent to the *Wall Street Journal* in response to addressing some of the issues I have raised here and throughout this letter to you.

Domestic U.S. Climate: Added to the above factors is the very fragile, fragmented, and unfavorable to say the least, domestic American socioeconomic and political environment. The Grass Root American public of all ages have become extremely weary of any more foreign military adventurism. The sober fact is that one of the greatest American social exceptionalisms, i.e., the upward mobility, no longer exists. At least not in its traditionally generalized term. Instead, favoritism, down right corruption, and *who you know, rather than what you know* has become the very sad reality and norm of the American way of life. In fact, many of the methods and socio-professional venues of conduits practiced in the U.S. such as the lobbyist-- which even your good intentions were unable to curb--is reminiscent of down right corruption by **any moral and/or legal parameters**. In such a climate, it would be naive, if not preposterous to even imagine that Americans are willing to sacrifice more--*Angels* as Vice-President Biden had rightfully called the fallen U.S. soldiers. The perception by the majority of Americans--spoken or otherwise-- is not that “the system is broke”--rather that it is “Fixed.” **In politics, as you know, perception is reality and the perception of a fair and/or just America has, therefore, very much evaporated long time ago from a society that**

will be unwilling to do—what will be perceived as-- the self-serving bidding of its disconnected elite and leadership from the reality of everyday challenges of the American man, woman, and now sadly children below the poverty line in the street. The above-described picture, if you accept and subscribe to it, is not the right recipe or conjuncture for launching more costly and **unrealistically unimplementable** foreign policy that has to be paid for economically and humanly in heavy burden manner by average Americans without any immediate tangible benefit and only more unimaginable sacrifices. Then, the Vietnam era slogan of ‘Hell No We Won’t Go” for a **VERY TIRED military that might very likely be needing to be refurbished through the reinstatement of the Draft—in case of any new serious conflict—**will be the ultimate outcome.

Alienation and Love: Mr. President, as the recent elections proved the weight of Hispanic community, along with the Boston attacks, it is time to accept the reality that the traditional :Melting Pot” does not exist. Instead, millions of new alienated immigrants from all over the world, along with strong cultural schism, is carpeting the sociocultural landscape of America. This is yet another serious domestic element that must be taken into account, where the new immigrants resent and reject , the American Foreign Policy towards, their original homeland and the rest of the non-European world. Hence another major hurdle and challenge to U.S. domestic support of American Foreign Policy.

Thus, with your permission, I will briefly and humbly enumerate what I think are immediate **actions** to be taken and pitfalls to avoid for jump-starting American Foreign Policy that seemingly is stuck in domestic political crisis and wrestling with global international socioeconomic tensions.

Rebooting American Foreign Policy: Mr. President, the most important capitals of American Foreign Policy being: credibility, moral values, and sense of justice and fairness have all been *completely* depleted Hence, specific actions in rebooting not only the perception, but **truly** to convey a message of engagement with both our adversaries as well as allies is what is promptly needed to rejuvenate the U.S. Foreign Policy. I will, therefore, respectfully point out the highlights of what I consider to be an essential, yet pertinent action(s) in that direction with the aim of achieving the desired goals underlined.

1. The U.S. must immediately establish diplomatic relationship with Cuba. It costs nothing, the domestic U.S. audience, with the exception of older generation Cubans who will eventually come around and get over it, will approve of it wholeheartedly. It is time to get past the 1950s through 1970s mentality and show the greatness of America, rather than its pettiness and the absurdity in pursuing the current policy. Furthermore, if the U.S. was able to return the sovereignty of Panama Canal over three decades ago, with such an important strategic implications, isn’t it time to also return Guantanamo as the icing on the cake in re-establishing relations with Cuba? Mr. President, this is an action **with unspeakable positive ripple effect both for U.S. global policy, and also the Central and Latin Americas**, particularly now that Hugo Chavez, the popular Venezuelan President era has ended.

2. Israel, Iran, and the Middle East: Exactly in that order. Mr. President, Israel has become the major impediment to the right foreign policy for United States' national security interests. In fact, the strength of Israeli lobbyist within the national debate and foreign policy process has become without a doubt, the Grover Norquist of American Foreign Policy whereby United States' Congressmen and Senators have been forced to sign an unwritten contract in favor of an uncompromising Israeli interest, policy, and actions—literally—to the detriment of the United States both national security interest and morally unjustifiable position. Thus, it should be noted that the U.S./Iran policy has not, is not, and will not be moving anywhere fruitful or positive as long as it is dictated by Israel drawing red lines for the U.S. and through its strong lobby.

As far as the Iranian nuclear program is concerned, it should be accepted as a reality and fait accompli. It is too late to stop and the best that can be achieved is to construct policies such as MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) that existed with the Soviet Union, to deal and live with it. Respectfully, I have enclosed a paper I wrote almost three decades ago as a Political Science Ph.D. candidate at the time on nuclear proliferation in general and arriving at the same conclusion I have just presented. The case of both India, Pakistan, and now Iran seems to unequivocally vindicate that conclusion. The notion of a military option against Iran may look good on paper as represented again by “The Boys From the Pentagon” but its consequential disastrous costly result will be many times more than the Iraq/Afghanistan adventurous gaffe combined. But respectfully, U.S./Iran policy not only lacks a proper optical analysis, but also any apt implementators able to achieve an applicable policy if and when it is set into motion.

Briefly, let's apply the three notions of geography, demography, and technology to Iran. Iran's geopolitical location and strategic plateau, along with its immense cultural affinity of ethnicity, language, religion, and a deep-seeded common history with its neighbors (as an example, Afghanistan was once part of Iran) gives her an unspeakable political influence in the region. Furthermore Iran, a sixth of the United States or if you like another better perception, two and a half times the size of Texas and **the biggest oil and natural gas reserve in the world**, together with other economic bases—allows the country a unique leverage not matched by any other country in the volatile Middle East region. Additionally, its demography of almost eighty million compounds its political and foreign policy posture expeditiously. Finally, Mr. President, Iran is the only county in the region that has launched a satellite, brought down a U.S. drone, flown its own drone as far as Israel, and continues to make **enormous conventional air, land, and even sea based-technological advancement**. The Iranian scientific team also dispatched to North Korea was instrumental in launching that country's last rocket.

The Eight Year “Imposed War” with Iraq as Iranians have labelled it was an eye opener in terms of political, strategic, economic, and human cost. The Iranian leadership and most importantly its Industrial Military Complex have prepared themselves diligently for any long-lasting conflict—**at any cost**. The

Israeli/Hezb-Allah conflict, a sergate of Iran a few years ago ending in Israeli defeat, should be just a simple example of Iranian resolve and capability. In case of a conflict and attack by the West, Iran can and will muster every and all military, political, and economic leverage—it will be a very costly proposition for both the United States, Israel, and any other “ally (ies)” who would be naïve to follow through in its blind support of such a conflict.

The analogy of Iran being the China of 1950-1960 is perhaps an appropriate one whereby the West, and particularly the United States, did not want to allow a newcomer into the international system. Iran, in its own right, can no longer be treated as a Third World Country and it is time, Mr. President, to deal with Iran—as a country—and not necessarily its current regime—for what she is, i.e., The Super Power of the region.

Iran currently is at a cross road of destiny and because of the many compounding sociocultural, political, and specially economic hardship—and barring unexpected events—the **next two years will be very determining for its domestic development**. It is time for the U.S. not to allow a repeat of the Cuban experience for many more decades. The American Foreign Policy and national security interests—**DICTATES**—to engage Iran immediately and under any term in order to position itself—for a strategically advantageous political and economic interest reaping situation during this upcoming period. Again, the experience of China rather than Cuba should be the guide line of an American Foreign Policy towards Iran. The U.S. needs Iran far more than the other way around and the strategic advantages of establishing relations with Iran that—again—the U.S. desperately needs within its Middle East foreign policy calculations—**can drastically change many of America’s dilemma in the region and world wide**.

3. Finally, Mr. President, it is time to achieve the two state solution in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. I would have put this problem at the top of your foreign policy priorities, even before the Cuba suggestion above, however, I have no illusion about the limits of a very timid U.S./Israeli policy that is quite simply unwilling or incapable to pressure Israel into the notion that the billions of dollars given to that country must be followed by certain American advice. Hence, I only hope that a small step during your administration can be taken towards the right direction which is **long over due** and has further affected U.S. interest throughout the Middle-East and the Muslim world in general. Respectfully your recent trip to Israel has vindicated my point and the Israeli grievances of Iranian nuclear program is quite simply a diverging tactic in granting the Palestinians their rights.

Last, But Not Least: Mr. President, other than seemingly a defiant United States in demanding “my way or highway,” **despite the realities reigning the global and domestic environment**, the modus operandi of American Foreign Policy has very wrongfully been handed over to the CIA which has become by all accounts, a Paramilitary Organization, even now contemplating assassinating American citizens inside the United States. This, Mr. President is a very bad dream that has come to pass

on your watch by literally putting America on the road of becoming, I am sorry to say at best, a benign police state no matter how much sugar coating it is applied to it. The sad example of former Ambassador Christopher Stevens' assassination, along with his team—all from the CIA and under the diplomatic cover—as you very well know, is only one ongoing approach that should be terminated immediately. The general American public may not be aware of the statue of those “Diplomats,” but I can assure you that the adversaries do and hence it makes their credibility in establishing and formulating a credible foreign policy—a failing proposition in advance. **This makes the general perception of U.S. Foreign Policy a “Plan and Plot” endeavour—which America can no longer afford or even achieve—rather than a genuinely engaging foreign policy.** At the end of the day, foreign Policy is about Power Politics. Sadly though, American Foreign Policy seemingly—in the eyes of adversaries and allies—does not possess a convincingly credible and focused power; and it certainly does not have the appropriate and matching politics (policy) that goes with it.

The role of “Intelligence Community,” Mr. President, should be as was originally designed: to be **seated behind the policy makers and not even next to them.** Sadly, it seems that now the intelligence community has taken itself all the way to the front row—without any impunity of being the jury, judge, and the prosecutor of American Foreign Policy. The dire effects of this wrong, very wrong approach has tarnished, and shall continue to tarnish any and all American Foreign Policy, policy posture, credibility, and above all, the moral values that used to be—as in a very past era—the passport to its acceptance and relatively successful implementation throughout the world. But continuing to assassinate American adversaries—respectfully—is not foreign policy but short-term crisis management and the assassinated adversaries will only be replaced by new, more intelligent, defiant and determined anti-Americans. **It is time to conceive a genuinely realistic foreign policy and above all, a realistic plan to implement it with competent people.** In a nutshell, and respectfully, **strategy is not foreign policy.** It is a policy that needs a proper strategy of implementation. American Foreign Policy, has sadly become purely a strategy(ies) within a vacuum directed largely by a Paramilitary Intelligence Organization—reminiscent of Communist countries' era—or for what the West has continued to criticize, Vladimir Putin's Russia. In reality, and—again respectfully-- within the above context—there is no difference with the current U.S. approach in achieving—only—a crisis management task. Meanwhile, America's National Security interest is lost in the turbulent waters of international relations in search of a coherent and binding foreign policy—that is yet to be proposed for a country of global stature but reminiscent of the behaviour of an unwarranted inexperienced nation.

Obviously, these pages cannot encompass everything or all aspects of an American Foreign Policy analysis, suffice to note that it is on the wrong path, no coherent policy exists, and above all, it **has become a crisis management endeavour** with literally billions thrown at it.

I thank you for your time and am very grateful for your being tolerant of a varying analysis—even if you disagree. I wish your administration the very best in all your endeavors, for you, the country, and the world with good faith American leadership intentions.

God bless you and the United States of America.

Hassan Farazian, Ph.D.

Enclosures: Paper on Nuclear Proliferation
Commentary to the Wall Street Journal