

Alex Enright – 3rd Place

National Security is the most important responsibility of the United States Government because without protection from terrorists, life as we now know it would come to a standstill as it did on September 11, 2001. The country was overcome with fear, schools were on lockdown with activities canceled, air travel ceased, the stock market plunged, and thousands of people died or were injured. Say what you want about President George W. Bush, but his administration has prevented another terrorist attack on U.S. soil. The new president, Barack Obama or John McCain, will need to concentrate on three key areas to combat the War Against Terror at home and abroad. Those three areas are: terror attack prevention, diplomacy with other countries, and proper military funding. The new administration will face many challenges after taking office, however, National Security must be at the top of the list or terrorists will again take this country by surprise.

According to the United States Constitution, Americans have a right to expect their government to protect them and keep them safe, especially on American soil. The new administration will need

to find ways to prevent terror attacks. One way is by preventing terrorists from entering the U.S. in the first place. Immigration laws need to be beefed up. On John McCain's website (johnmccain.com), McCain states his "top priority is to finish securing our borders in an expedited manner" through physical and virtual barriers by providing "training facilities, support staff and the deployment of technologies." Airline security also needs to continue to be improved. Chemical plants and nuclear power plants are easy targets for terrorists and need to have better security. Barack Obama's website (barackobama.com) states that Senator Obama and Senator Frank Lautenberg (D-NJ) introduced legislation that would regulate "chemical facilities to enhance security, including improving barriers, containment, mitigation, and safety training, and where possible, using safer technology such as less toxic chemicals." The new president must keep our borders secure, our citizens safe as they travel, and must protect potential targets from terrorist attacks.

The second area the next president must concentrate on is diplomacy with other countries. The next administration needs to meet with our allies to enlist their support in the War Against Terror

globally. Our allies should be concerned about preventing nuclear threats from Iran and North Korea, hunting down al Qaeda in Afghanistan and Pakistan, China's oppression of Taiwan, and Russia's attack on Georgia. President George W. Bush used diplomacy to encourage Russia to sign a cease-fire agreement with Georgia on August 16, 2008. The new president should also use diplomacy as an alternative to military force when other countries take threatening actions against our allies. Barack Obama stated in 2007 that he would be willing to meet with some of America's biggest enemies, including Iran's president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. (Whitelaw 36) John McCain responded to this by saying, "It's hard to see what such a summit with President Ahmadinejad would actually gain, except an earful of anti-Semitic rants." (Whitelaw 36) Obama replied, "It is time to once again make American diplomacy a tool to succeed, not just a means of containing failure." (Whitelaw 36)

When diplomacy fails, however, the United States needs to rely on its military to protect Americans at home and abroad. The next president must insure that our military is fully funded so our troops have proper equipment, monetary compensation, medical benefits,

and relief time from overseas duty to be with their families. One of my best friends served three tours overseas as an Army Ranger while I was going to college having fun with my friends. We need to support those who have sacrificed for our country. To insure that our soldiers get enough relief from active duty, the next president should increase the size of the military. Both McCain and Obama, according to their websites, intend to increase the size of the military. According to his website, "John McCain has fought for improved military pay and benefits, and an improved quality of life for military families." (johnmccain.com) McCain also wants to procure "advanced weapons systems that will help rapidly and decisively defeat any adversary and protect American lives." Barack Obama promises on his website to "fully equip our troops for the missions they face." (barackobama.com)

The United States military has done an excellent job of protecting Americans from terrorist attacks since September 11, 2001. The Federal Government has been successful in peace negotiations with other countries and in strengthening relations with our allies. Our government has also tried to protect our borders and prevent terrorists from attacking the United States.

The United States Constitution states that it was established to “insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare and secure the blessings of liberty” for its citizens. The new Administration, whether led by John McCain or Barack Obama, must continue to keep Americans safe at home and abroad because National Security is the most important responsibility of the Federal Government.

Works Cited

<http://www.barackobama.com/issues/>

<http://www.johnmccain.com/Informing/Issues/>

Whitelaw, Kevin. “Taking On A Perilous World.” U.S. News & World Report