



[The President's Troubling Trend on the World Stage](#)

by Rep. Mike Pence

On the eve of his address to the United Nations, President Obama warned world leaders meeting in New York City of the "irreversible catastrophe" of climate change. The president did so while many of the critical confrontations boiling over on the world stage were laid on the back burner of the agenda at the United Nations. A look at the growing list of challenges sends a startling message that such concerns are the least of our problems.

As we approach eight years of conflict in Afghanistan, the country faces the prospect of slipping back into the hands of the Taliban and becoming a safe haven for Al-Qaeda terrorists. Israel endures growing pressure from the Obama administration to appease the growing demands of the Palestinian authorities. Soon the United States will sit down with an Iran that is determined to develop nuclear weapons and equally determined not to talk about it. Manuel Zelaya has returned yet again to Honduras, hoping to incite a riot that will propel him back to power. North Korea continues to defy the international community by testing nuclear weapons.

It is clear from the latest headlines that the threat to freedom and peace still exists in many parts of the world. Less than fifty years ago, President John F. Kennedy pledged to support any friend and oppose any foe to ensure the survival of liberty. Throughout our nation's history, American presidents from across the political divide offered hope to those held captive by tyranny and reminded their captors that America's cause was the cause of freedom. The question being asked by both friend and foe is whether the United States is still committed to that cause today.

President Obama's first eight months on the world stage are deeply troubling. It is not just the repeated apologies for alleged American transgressions. We are witnessing a disturbing pattern that extends a hand of cooperation to our enemies while turning a cold shoulder to our friends and a blind eye to their suffering.

It was evident in the streets of Iran, where dissidents rallied for the right to have their votes counted and their voices heard. Their cries for a free and fair election and basic human rights were written in English intended for a watching world. The Iranian government responded with a

crackdown on the dissidents that turned deadly.

The week before violence broke out in Iran, President Obama spoke eloquently about the fundamental rights of all individuals to have a say in how they are governed. But as these human rights were violated at the hands of the Iranian government, President Obama at first remained silent, assuring the Ayatollah that the U.S. would not "meddle," while pleading for an audience with the Mullahs who endorse the murder of innocent civilians in the West.

Yet, while the president didn't want to meddle on behalf of beaten Iranian dissidents, he was quick to take sides in the current crisis in Honduras. Based upon the legitimate authority of the Honduran Supreme Court, President Zelaya was arrested and removed from office for illegally seeking to expand his presidential authority. The National Congress affirmed his removal and, in keeping with their constitution, appointed an interim president until new elections are held this November.

As events unfolded, President Obama took the side of despots like Hugo Chavez and the Castro brothers in denouncing the actions of the duly elected representatives of Honduras. President Obama has intervened to return Zelaya to power, while cutting aid to the people of Honduras and revoking the visas of lawful Honduran officials. These officials have even been denied an opportunity to present their case before members of the U.S. Congress, while Zelaya has been given a free pass throughout our nation's capitol and escorted to the Brazilian embassy in Honduras.

Many of the challenges that confront the young democracies of Latin America also exist throughout much of the world once imprisoned behind the Iron Curtain. The vestiges of communism cling to power and intimidate the democratic ambitions of its neighbors. The United States has been a steady ally as Eastern Europe moves from tyranny to democracy. Yet as Poland remembered the 70th anniversary of the Soviet tanks rolling through its streets, President Obama announced his decision to roll back plans for a missile shield based in Eastern Europe.

It was just last year when Russia invaded Georgia, and Russia continues to use natural gas, meant to heat homes and fuel commerce, as a political weapon throughout the region. Instead of holding Moscow accountable for acts of aggression, we have turned our back on friends who now suffer the lonely consequences of placing their trust in us.

If history has taught us anything, it is that weakness emboldens evil and rogue dictators grow stronger when appeased. The American people have learned, at a great price, that peace is secured through strength. Not since the days of the Carter administration has the United States looked so weak on the international stage and so incapable of leading the international community to address our common challenges.

We must change course. If we are no longer willing to remain a beacon of hope to those yearning for freedom or stand unprepared to speak truth to power, then who will?