- Before 9/11, there were barriers restricting the sharing of information between law enforcement and the intelligence community to counter terrorism. Today, with the passage and reauthorization of the USA PATRIOT Act and the creation of the National Counterterrorism Center, these walls no longer exist, and the United States continues to create a robust information sharing environment to ensure appropriate information sharing between the law enforcement and intelligence community and among Federal, State, local, and tribal authorities.

- Before 9/11, homeland security consisted of a patchwork of efforts undertaken by disparate departments and agencies. Today, we have a comprehensive approach, consolidated under the Department of Homeland Security, including key strategies for maritime and aviation security.

- Before 9/11, terrorism and WMD proliferation were treated largely as separate concerns. Today, we have a comprehensive strategy to combat WMD terrorism with domestic institutions to support its implementation, bolstered by an international framework (UNSCR 1540 and the Convention Against Nuclear Terrorism) and strategic partnerships (Proliferation Security Initiative and the newly unveiled Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism).

- Before 9/11, the A.Q. Khan nuclear network was working in over three continents to provide North Korea, Iran, and Libya sensitive centrifuge technology and parts for their nuclear weapons programs and was poised to expand its services to other countries. Today, the network has been exposed and shut down. Each of its key members is in prison, under house arrest, or facing prosecution, and governments are acting individually and collectively to make it harder for similar networks to operate in the future.

- Before 9/11, there were insufficient international standards for identity documents and no comprehensive use of tools to verify identities. Today, there are strong domestic and international standards for passport and travel document issuance, use of biometrics to verify identities of travelers, comprehensive screening of passengers at airports, and a National Strategy to Combat Terrorist Travel.

- Before 9/11, the United States, did not openly challenge repression and restricted liberties in the Arab world, prioritizing stability, yet stability was not the outcome --the lack of freedom in the region meant anger and resentment grew, radicalism thrived, and terrorists found willing recruits. Today, democracy and freedom are an integral part of the U.S. agenda globally, reflected in such initiatives as the G-8's collaboration with the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) in the Partnership for Progress and a Common Future.

- Before 9/11, throughout most of the broader Middle East and North Africa, democratic institutions and processes were, with the exception of Israel, largely weak or even nonexistent. Today, freely contested multiparty elections are more common and are increasingly accepted as the basis for legitimate government.