

**CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

**BBC LIVE AT CARNEGIE  
FOREIGN POLICY FOR OBAMA:  
THE CHALLENGES**

**WELCOME AND MODERATOR:**  
**ROBIN LUSTIG,**  
PRESENTER,  
BBC WORLD SERVICE AND RADIO 4

**SPEAKERS:**  
**JESSICA TUCHMAN MATHEWS,**  
PRESIDENT,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

**GEORGE PERKOVICH,**  
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDIES,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

**ROBERT KAGAN,**  
SENIOR ASSOCIATE,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

**AMBASSADOR JAMES F. COLLINS,**  
DIRECTOR, RUSSIA AND EURASIA PROGRAM,  
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2008**

*Transcript by  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.*

ROBIN LUSTIG: It's 10:00. This is "The World Tonight" with Robin Lustig in Washington where, in a special program, we're going to be examining in detail what Barack Obama's foreign policy priorities are likely to be when he takes office next month. Will he agree to binding reductions in carbon gas emissions to combat climate change?

(Begin audio clip.)

JOHN COOKE (SP): I am quite convinced that the U.S. can agree to greenhouse gas emissions cuts this year. It's a very exciting time to be in Washington, D.C.

(End audio clip.)

MR. LUSTIG: And will he be able to get things moving in the Middle East peace process?

(Begin audio clip.)

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI: I don't think anyone can get things moving unless the president of the United States first makes it clear that he wants things to move forward.

(End audio clip.)

MR. LUSTIG: And what about pulling U.S. troops out of Iraq, relations with Russia and China and dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions?

MR. LUSTIG: You're listening to "The World Tonight" with Robin Lustig. Here in Washington, you can't escape the sense of anticipation as the U.S. Capitol prepares for a new presidency. On the 20<sup>th</sup> of next month, Barack Obama will be sworn in as the nation's 44<sup>th</sup> president, a Democrat after eight years of the Republican George W. Bush. He promised change, "change you can believe in," is what he called it, and for the watching and waiting world, the big question is what sort of changes he's planning in America's foreign policy.

Here at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, I'm joined tonight by a panel of distinguished analysts and an invited audience. They, like the rest of us, want to know how many of the promises made by Senator Barack Obama will actually be carried out by President Obama.

So before we hear from our panelists, Paul Moss reports on some of the promises he made.

(Begin audio clip.)

PRESIDENT-ELECT BARACK OBAMA: We must be as careful getting out of Iraq as we were careless getting in. But start to leave we must.

PAUL MOSS: It was the issue that always got the campaign crowds roaring their approval. Barack Obama was one of a minority of senators who had opposed the war in Iraq and, now, as a presidential candidate, Obama was promising that he would pull American troops out.

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: It's time for Iraqis to take responsibility for their future. (Cheers.) It's time to rebuild our military and give our veterans the care they deserve when they come home.

MR. MOSS: This was a position that gave Barack Obama his unique selling point. But events have made it a little less distinctive. The Iraqi government itself put pressure on the U.S. to pull out and George Bush has now agreed that American forces will be removed from the country by 2011. Still, Senator Obama has promised they'll be gone a year earlier than this. And he says he'll begin the withdrawal process immediately on taking office.

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: The war in Iraq was a mistake. We need to bring this war to a responsible end. It is a strategic error for us to maintain a long-term occupation in Iraq.

MR. : Welcome aboard.

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: Thank you so much. It's great to see you guys.

MR. MOSS: And just to emphasize the point, Barack Obama took his presidential campaign to Afghanistan. If Iraq was a strategic error, he said, that was partly because it was diverting military resources away from this, the most important battle. He met with American troops fighting the Taliban and promised they would get more support from a President Obama than from any Republican.

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: What President Bush and Senator McCain don't understand is that the central front in the war on terror is not in Iraq and it never was. The central front is in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

MR. MOSS: But, once again, Obama's position is not quite so distinctive anymore. The U.S. is currently reviewing its strategy in Afghanistan and the need to shift troops there from Iraq has already become something like Pentagon orthodoxy. Meanwhile, some advocate a more radical change of approach. Francesc Vendrell was the European Union special envoy in Afghanistan and he has a warning for the incoming president.

FRANCESC VENDRELL: We haven't put enough emphasis on the reform of governance in the country and the need to deliver basic services to the population. And for as long as that is not done, the Taliban will be seen as offering something that they don't have. You can't simply fight the Taliban militarily.

PRESIDENT-ELECT OBAMA: I'm here on this trip to reaffirm the special relationship between Israel and the United States.

MR. MOSS: And so, to another country where Barack Obama had a point to prove. During the campaign, he was dogged by accusations that he was too pro-Palestinian. No way, insisted the senator, promising he would apply energy and focus towards reaching a peace deal there, all of which sounded very familiar to Aaron David Miller, an advisor to six American secretaries of state. He's not convinced President Obama will or indeed should necessarily pursue this goal.

AARON DAVID MILLER: The real question is simply this: Can he succeed? Is there enough raw material between the Israelis and the Palestinians or, in my judgment, between the Israelis and the Syrians, out of which he can fashion a success? If it appears as if the Arabs and the Israelis aren't prepared to pull the freight, he is not going to willfully proceed; he simply has too much else on his plate.

MR. MOSS: Like, for example, what to do with the people incarcerated on a small area of land on the eastern tip of Cuba. The prison at Guantanamo Bay was set up by George Bush to hold those suspected of being on the wrong side in the war against terror. Now, President Bush had said he'd like to close it eventually, but tonight it seems even more likely that President-Elect Obama intends to close Guantanamo as soon as he can.

Yet, that commitment still leaves many issues unresolved according to Ken Roth, executive director of the campaign group, Human Rights Watch.

KENNETH ROTH: I think the big open questions for the Obama administration will be, first, how does he close Guantanamo? Clearly he's going to. But is he going to basically just move Guantanamo onshore by continuing to detain people without trial or is he going to give them proper trials in regular U.S. federal court?

STEVEN CHU: I'm honored to be selected as the nominee for secretary of energy.

MR. MOSS: It was perhaps the most striking choice in Obama's White House team. This week he unveiled Steven Chu as his energy secretary, a Nobel Prize-winning physicist but, above all, a key advocate of taking action on climate change. It's in this area that Barack Obama has aroused most expectation of a radical change in policy away from George Bush who often sounded skeptical about whether climate change really existed.

MR. COOKE: Barack Obama ran these ads where he showed windmills and electric cars. There's just no doubt that he was elected on this mandate.

MR. MOSS: John Cooke is a spokesman for the environmental organization, the Sierra Club, and has himself been consulted by Barack Obama's presidential transition team.

MR. COOKE: Some of the forces that would stand in our way are still there; there are still legislators, there are still senators. But the environmental people on Obama's team are absolutely energized and they understand the legislative system very, very well. I'm quite convinced that the U.S. can agree to greenhouse gas emissions cuts this year. It's a very exciting time to be in Washington, D.C.

(End audio clip.)

MR. LUSTIG: Well, that was John Cooke, head of the environmental organization, the Sierra Club, ending that report from Paul Moss. So let's see how much of that excitement our panelists here in Washington think is justified. With me are: Jessica Tuchman Mathews, who is the president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and has been since 1967, she is a former senior official on the U.S. National Security Council; Robert Kagan, a senior associate here at the Carnegie, once described as one of the world's top 100 public intellectuals, a contributing editor

at both The Weekly Standard and The New Republic magazines and a regular columnist at the Washington Post; George Perkovich, director of Carnegie's nonproliferation program; and James Collins, former U.S. ambassador in Moscow – now the director of the Carnegie's Russia program.

Welcome to you all. I'd like to start with Iraq and Afghanistan. Jessica Mathews, if a chef has a signature dish, Obama has a signature policy, doesn't he; combat troops out of Iraq within 16 months. Will he do it?

JESSICA MATHEWS: I doubt that it will be 16 months, but it will be 16 plus or minus a few. And the key is going to be what happens domestically in this country to the very broad consensus about getting out when, in the next year, violence increases in Iraq.

MR. LUSTIG: Because if there is more violence in Iraq, you think there'll be pressure to put troops back in?

MS. MATHEWS: Well, there'll certainly be pressure to interrupt the withdrawal at the very least, but it depends upon the magnitude of the violence. It's going to be very difficult. If violence does escalate – and I think there's certainly a very good chance of it – it's going to be very difficult for the United States to swallow the feeling of losing or of not having achieved its full goals.

MR. LUSTIG: Robert Kagan, if the troops come out of Iraq, does it follow from that that the likelihood is, in Afghanistan, there will be both more troops and more war?

ROBERT KAGAN: Well, I think that there's obviously going to be an increase in the number of troops in Afghanistan, and I think that's probably irrespective of what happens in Iraq. I think the troops are available. The question of what is going to be done with those troops is something that I think we're waiting to see, in a way. I'm confident that General David Petraeus, who is kind of the mastermind of the surge in Iraq, has been thinking long and hard and will be presenting President Obama with some options. I think that no one believes that there is a military solution in Afghanistan – that we can fight our way to victory in Afghanistan – and there's going to have to be significant political, economic and diplomatic efforts as well.

MR. LUSTIG: But Barack Obama said throughout the campaign, didn't he, that one of the arguments he had with the Bush approach was that he was fighting the war in the wrong place – that he shouldn't have been fighting in Iraq; he should have been fighting in Afghanistan because that's where the enemy was.

MR. KAGAN: Well, I think we have to be a little bit careful about campaign rhetoric. I think that Barack Obama was trying to demonstrate that, although he was opposed to the war in Iraq, that doesn't mean he's opposed to all war, it doesn't mean he's opposed to the war on terror. I think he will find, if he hasn't already decided, that he put a little bit too much emphasis on winning the war in Afghanistan. It's going to – I'm sure the generals and everyone else will tell him that it's not going to be an easy thing to do. And I wouldn't be surprised if there's a somewhat lowering of expectations and the general focus on Afghanistan. And after all, we're confronted with some other issues in the region, like Pakistan, which I expect will take up a great deal more of time and energy of the Obama administration.

MR. LUSTIG: And on that, George Perkovich, specifically, relations with Pakistan and the approach to Pakistan: Do you see Barack Obama saying to Pakistan, you are going to have to do more about those insurgents who are seeking sanctuary in the border area with Afghanistan, or, as he seemed to suggest during the campaign, I'm going to go come and in and do it for you?

GEORGE PERKOVICH: Well, he can say all sorts of things, but the question is what can the Pakistanis realistically do. The fact, as you allude to, though, is that we already – the U.S. military already – has been conducting strikes in the tribal areas of Pakistan with the knowledge of the Pakistani military. Not clear what the net effect of that is – in other words, lots of people argue that, in fact, it build resistance in Pakistan to the very government that you're then trying to get to reform on a whole range of issues. So I think the whole question of how you approach Pakistan and what the resources you bring to bear is an open question. And then, in other words, the last point would be one of the strengths of the United States is we see any problem as having a solution. Pakistan may be a problem, you know, without a solution – or at least, without one that a president could implement.

MR. LUSTIG: But do you envisage a real possibility of a President Obama authorizing a series of air strikes in Pakistan against what he is being advised are insurgent or Taliban bases?

MR. PERKOVICH: Again, I think what he alluded to in the campaign was, if you had very precise intelligence about leading al Qaeda figures, that you would target them. I think any president would do that. If what you're suggesting is a broader kind of air campaign against Pakistan, I would think no way, because at the end of that, you still need Pakistani cooperation and you're not going to get it.

MR. LUSTIG: James Collins, Barack Obama made his name in the early days of his campaign as an anti-Iraq war campaigner. Some people thought that that implied that he was anti-war. He has been at pains, as Bob Kagan suggests, to say that that's not the case. Might it be the case, do you believe, that he will, in fact, find himself fighting more wars?

JAMES COLLINS: Well, I think the first point will be for him to define what the enemy or who the enemy is. One of the real troubles, it seems to me, over the past several years is we have confused just what it is we're fighting. You don't fight terror; it's a process. I mean, you fight the people who conduct terror. And even in Afghanistan, it seems to me what we're dealing with is a large, reasonably well-organized and reasonably well-funded group of thugs.

MR. LUSTIG: Is that how he sees it, do you think?

MR. COLLINS: Well, I hope so. I mean, I hope that he is not confusing it with Afghan tribes or confusing it with large elements of the Pakistani population. I mean, the terrorist group al Qaeda, in the main, has been the enemy from the outset. It's a difficult one to define, but we really have to go after that enemy and try to differentiate it from, if you will, large populations in large areas of nationality or countries.

MR. LUSTIG: Okay, let's, then, leave that kind of war and move on to another kind of war, because what's uppermost in many people's minds around the world is the issue of climate change, global warming. One of the very first things that President Bush did when he came to office eight years ago was, he said, Kyoto is not for the U.S. Obama said, and I quote, "He would lead a new,

international global warming partnership. He would make the U.S. a leader in the global effort to combat climate change.” Jessica Mathews, do you read that to mean that he will sign up to what, at the moment, is being referred to as Kyoto II?

MS. MATHEWS: The big war he has to fight on climate is here at home. And it is the question of whether we are ready to confront changes in our patterns of energy use after 35 years of inaction on energy. And I have to say that most of the rhetoric during the campaign would lead you to think that the American people are not quite ready, even now, to do that.

MR. LUSTIG: Even though they voted for him?

MS. MATHEWS: Yes, but even now, the other big, new war since the campaign, of course, is the global financial crisis. So the question will be, what will be the administration’s internal discussions about whether – about what they can ask for, on what the system can handle on this. And early signs are a bit worrisome in the sense of a feeling that the key issue, which is price – they are not prepared to confront.

MR. LUSTIG: The price that the American motorist pays at the pump.

MS. MATHEWS: Right. I mean, this – you can’t do energy with just regulation. And if oil is cheap, then all the things that he needs to do, wants to do, he can’t do. So that’s one big issue. The other big issue is China. This, really – the key issues for the world for Kyoto II are not what 170 countries think, but what the U.S. and China can agree to, because the other big actors are ready to move. And climate is a funny global issue because really, only a very small number of countries matter in terms of emissions. And China and the U.S. are more than 40 percent. And the U.S. is not going to move unless it is convinced that China will follow. And so the key here is for the United States and China to reach some commitment whereby the U.S. commits itself to acting first and China agrees to some formula by which it will follow. And that will be the key for unlocking a new global agreement.

MR. LUSTIG: Robert Kagan, about a year from now, there’s going to be a key conference in Copenhagen at which, they hope, they’re going to be able to come up with some new form of Kyoto deal. Leading up to Copenhagen, the Obama administration is going to have to make known the approach it will take. What approach do you think it will take?

MR. KAGAN: (Chuckles.) I’m so the wrong person to be asking that question.

MR. LUSTIG: Because?

MR. KAGAN: Because I don’t know anything about it. (Laughter.) So there are people at this table who could answer that question, but I’m not one of them. Jessica, I’m sure, could answer that question.

MR. LUSTIG: Well, we’ve heard from Jessica Mathews, James Collins.

(Laughter.)

MR. COLLINS: I'm not sure I can define just what approach they'll take, but I can define what I would hope he will try, because I think it meshes both with the needs he sees in front of him in facing the economic crisis, but also a longer-term objective. And that is that we really need some kind of Manhattan-type Project to attack the questions of how are we going to define the alternatives to the current dependence on coal and oil. Now, some of that's out there, but we are going to, sooner or later, have to find the alternative to the internal combustion engine and we're going to have to find the alternatives to coal, or at least coal as we now use it. But one of the areas he can certainly move in, it seems to me, is to begin to invest government, public money in programs that will begin to build a base to search for and find those alternatives and then develop them.

MS. MATHEWS: Robin, could I just disagree with my colleague for a moment?

MR. LUSTIG: Please, feel free.

MS. MATHEWS: R&D is easy, and we've been doing a ton of R&D forever on energy – I mean, not enough, but we've done a lot. The problem we haven't done is change behavior. And the irony and the risk in the decision to sort of throw every amount of money we have at the stimulus package and at the global recession is that there is starting to sort of be a feeling that the answer is money. But the answer isn't money; the answer is changing behavior and that's going to be the real key.

MR. LUSTIG: All right. I have a feeling that we're going to have to put a big question mark over that one and wait to see. Let's move on to two other major foreign policy issues. Now, one is an end, possibly, to the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians; the other is America's developing relationship with China. Before I get your thoughts on that, let's hear from a man who has been close to the Obama team throughout the presidential election campaign and was, himself, national security advisor to a previous Democratic Party president, Jimmy Carter, in the late 1970s. He is Zbigniew Brzezinski. I spoke to him here in Washington this afternoon and I asked him, first, what he thinks Barack Obama will do about peace in the Middle East.

(Begin audio clip.)

MR. BRZEZINSKI: If he reaches the conclusion that this is an essentially intractable problem that can only be addressed step by step, then we'll have a lot of the past being replayed in the present and the future. If he, however, reaches the conclusion that this is a problem that is susceptible to solution, provided a constructively minded outside party becomes actively engaged, namely the United States, then he can push the process forward by helping the Israeli and the Palestinians reach an agreement from today regarding, at least, the fundamental parameters of what is bound to be a very complex and difficult settlement.

MR. LUSTIG: You will remember Camp David – Anwar Sadat, Menachem Begin – a huge step forward in the Middle East. It was a moment when a number of things came together and made that possible; do you see anything now that would make you think that similar sets of circumstances exist?

MR. BRZEZINSKI: What made it possible at the time was, first of all, Sadat's willingness to break the logjam, the Israelis' initial responsiveness, but then rigidity. Then, a stalemate

developed and it was broken entirely, thanks to the president of the United States, Carter. If he hadn't taken the steps that he did – if he hadn't engaged himself personally – the thing would have never been crowned a success.

MR. LUSTIG: Let's turn to China because that's another major issue, particularly in the current economic circumstances with all major powers, including of course the U.S. and China, experiencing major difficulties. Do you see a real crisis developing in the relationship between the U.S. and China?

MR. BRZEZINSKI: I may be letting my wishful thinking dominate my judgment, but my sense is that that is not likely to take place, in part because we are, in a way, linked together in an asymmetrical fashion. They are lending us money and we're becoming more indebted, but their lending us money enables them to conduct a policy of development based on exports. And if one or the other were to take some action rupturing the relationship, both would suffer. And I think the Chinese and we are intelligent enough to realize that that would be the case.

MR. LUSTIG: So what do you think an incoming president should do to encourage the Chinese to think along those lines?

MR. BRZEZINSKI: I think the Chinese are thinking along those lines. I follow the Chinese strategic literature – serious literature – really closely. And I happen to engage in a lot of dialogue with the top leaders themselves on a personal basis, on a regular basis. So I think I have some sense of how they assess the world. I'm not being Pollyannish, incidentally; I don't think that China is necessarily a status quo power. It is a revisionist power; it wants a change in the international system. But unlike Russia, for example, it is really prepared to work within the system to change the system.

(End audio clip.)

MR. LUSTIG: Zbigniew Brzezinski, former national security advisor to President Jimmy Carter. George Perkovich, on the Middle East, first of all, do you believe that President Obama will have the kind of driving determination that Dr. Brzezinski talks of Jimmy Carter having had to try to move the process forward?

MR. PERKOVICH: Well, I think the report suggested caution. If you do the analysis and you have doubts about the success then you wouldn't start and spend your political capital on something that's doubtful, number one. Number two: There are elections in Israel in February, so we don't even know who the interlocutor is in Israel and what they want – whether they even want to participate in, with good brokerage, a process. Secondly, as was alluded to, there's the question of the capabilities. You have to assess, could an Israeli leadership deliver? Okay, probably, but could a Palestinian leadership deliver?

I do think there is an element of hope in this interview that Prime Minister Olmert gave in November, which was very interesting, where he said, acknowledging that it's easy for outgoing Prime Minister to say it, but nonetheless, very heartfelt. You know, that Israelis have to understand that they're going to have to give up settlements and they're going to have to give up all of that territory, whether or not in the settlements or an equivalent parcel. That was very strong. And the

other thing, you know, impressively, he talked about Jerusalem and told his people that, yes, we're going to have to accept a Palestinian presence, in a significant way, in Jerusalem.

MR. LUSTIG: Jessica Mathews, just one question I wanted to ask you: Hillary Clinton as secretary of state, some people might think, will try to build on what President Bill Clinton tried to do right at the end of his presidency, which was really to try to replicate the Jimmy Carter-Begin-Sadat Camp David. Do you think she might?

MS. MATHEWS: Well, I think it would be a mistake because the world is a very different place than it was eight years ago, and the Clinton team had significant achievements on this issue, but it's a different set of facts on the ground and that requires fresh thinking now.

MR. LUSTIG: Okay. You're listening to a special edition of "The World Tonight" with Robin Lustig at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington. Let's move on, now, to America's relations with Russia because they ran into all sorts of difficulties under President Bush. Moscow objected vehemently to his plans for an anti-missile defense shield, which would involve developing military facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic.

It also objected to Washington's enthusiasm for two more of Russia's neighbors, Ukraine and Georgia, joining NATO, or at least being granted a NATO membership action plan, or MAP. For a Moscow view of what Barack Obama might change, I asked Mikhail Margelov, who's the chairman of the foreign affairs committee of the upper house of the Russian parliament, how much of a real change he thinks there'll be.

(Begin audio clip.)

MIKHAIL MARGELOV: We think that we have a kind of a new room of opportunity, maybe not a notion as similar to what we had right after 9/11, but we have a good room of opportunity which we can either use or lose.

MR. LUSTIG: Has Mr. Obama or anyone on his team said specifically about their vision of how relations with Russia develop which you regard as a good signal?

MR. MARGELOV: Well, actually, I was at the Democratic Convention in Denver as one of the few Russian guests. And we all remember that time – it was right after the war in South Caucasus, the situation was aggravating. Senator McCain was coming up with very strong statements about Russia – about Russian political leadership. At the same in Denver, Obama was also making statements but at the same time, I was getting, let's say, off the record, signals from his team that while it's not because Obama thinks that Russia's bad but because we are campaigning and we have to be comparable in what we say about foreign policy issues with our main competitor.

I can say that Barack Obama – the way he was presenting himself during the campaign, the way he was handling the international agenda, even when he was in Berlin. He was showing to the entire Europe that he's ready for change. And the main change as we see it is that he is ready to give up the strategy of unipolar world and think about multipolarity. If that is so, we, in Russia, can only welcome that.

MR. LUSTIG: Let's take a couple of specific examples. What do you expect from Mr. Obama and his administration on anti-missile defense?

MR. MARGELOV: Well, we expect more pragmatism. We in Russia were never asking our American counterparts to abandon this or that defense project. We were trying to convince them that we have common threats and it doesn't matter, either it is Iran or North Korea or whatever. Let us think about common strategy in combating those threats. And we still do not understand why several Russian sites which were proposed as sites for joint missile defense project were not okay for the American administration. If we really want to combat threats, let us do that together.

MR. LUSTIG: What do you expect, then, from Mr. Obama on the expansion of NATO? What do you expect him to say to Ukraine and Georgia?

MR. MARGELOV: Well, actually, the American position on the expansion of NATO was clearly stated at the latest NATO summit. Neither Georgia nor Ukraine got MAP. Definitely, it's not the victory of Russia, it's the victory of Europe because what NATO needs and what the European Union needs, what the Council of Europe, the whole Europe needs is stability and predictability. While we neither see stability and predictability in Tbilisi or in Kiev, in Russia, we read that as a signal of pragmatism, which is, as we hope, now prevailing in Brussels.

(End audio clip.)

MR. LUSTIG: The senior Russian parliamentarian, Mikhail Margelov, Ambassador Collins, is he right to expect pragmatism from Barack Obama both on anti-missile defense and on NATO expansion?

MR. COLLINS: Well, President-elect Obama really has not made specific positions known on many of these issues. He did give an interview the other day in which he said implicitly that he's prepared to turn a new page with Russia but it was going to have to be a two-way street, as the way I read it. He said he was ready to reset the relationship. I think with respect to the issues that Mr. Margelov has identified, it's very early to understand what the positions will be. I think, however, that we may expect that the beginning point for any policy with President Obama will be to work closely with his European allies in defining kinds of approaches to these issues.

And secondly, that I think it's probably fair to say that he knows full well that a critical issue is going to be the entire complex of nuclear matters that my friend George Perkovich is dealing with, countering proliferation, dealing with the strategic arms reduction agreement follow on, that complex of issues. I think both of those, it's pretty clear, are going to be addressed early on.

MR. LUSTIG: Robert Kagan, do you expect, is there any chance, do you think, that Barack Obama will say early on in his administration, I don't believe in all this anti-missile stuff, I'm going to scrap it?

MR. KAGAN: I don't think so, and I think it's important, and I'm sure the Obama administration will see this, that there are more players in this game than Russia and the United States. There are Eastern European countries that are watching to see how the United States is going to respond and not just Ukraine and Georgia, but the Baltic States, Poland. It'll be quite a blow to Poland – to the Polish government which has really gone out on a limb. So I would expect

probably a more of a – let's say a nuanced position rather than we're just going to scrap it because there are a lot of follow-on implications.

MR. LUSTIG: George Perkovich, on nonproliferation, do you see a major change coming?

MR. PERKOVICH: I think there'll be a major change. I want to come back just briefly on the missile-defense issue in Europe and I think it was important what Mikhail Margelov said about this, which he was saying, don't expect to drop it, but rather to cooperate on it. That's important and also if you dropped it, it's a win for Iran and no one wants that to be a consequence.

MR. LUSTIG: Is that an approach which you think will attract Barack Obama?

MR. PERKOVICH: Yes. He's smarter than I am and if I can figure this out, I'm sure he can. (Laughter.) So, yes.

MR. LUSTIG: On the issue of how to deal with Iran's nuclear program: what do you expect from Barack Obama?

MR. PERKOVICH: Well, there again, I mean, I think what he said in the campaign about being willing to talk to, you know, Iranian leaders and stuff was over-interpreted. The – and a lot of his focus on the first Bush administration, which had a very misguided approach. But people don't recall that this July, the undersecretary of State of the United States did go and meet with Iranian –

MR. LUSTIG: But he wasn't allowed to say anything, did he?

MR. PERKOVICH: Well, I don't think it would have been a good idea for him to say much given how the Iranians behaved in the process. I talked to people who were there. It's probably better to have just, you know, bitten one's lip. But the point is that the U.S. was there. There was no precondition. The Iranians were busy enriching uranium while we were sitting there. It could have been a negotiation except the Iranians don't negotiate. Anybody in Europe will tell you that. So already, there is a willingness to talk with Iranians about any given subject. I think that will increase with President Obama. But the indications, you know, from Iran are that they may not be interested. So I think that the big challenge here is whether the Iranians want to pick up and explore these hints and engage.

MR. LUSTIG: Jessica Mathews, there are fears in some quarters around the world that at some point, the U.S. and Europe or the rest of the world are going to have to decide what to do if it becomes absolutely clear that Iran is indeed determined to pursue a nuclear weapons program, something which it denies that it is seeking to do. What approach do you think a President Obama administration would take if that was the choice he had to make?

MS. MATHEWS: I think that the two options that have been most discussed – one of them is military action – is a nonstarter. If there had been a military – a reasonable military approach on this issue, the Bush administration would have taken it. They spent years trying to figure one out. The other option is to simply accept an Iranian bomb and live with it. That has huge consequences because it almost certainly means that you're likely to have Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, maybe others, trying to have a nuclear – and I think that's the end of a nonproliferation – of any hopes for

the world and for that regime. And really, we don't know whether you can keep the stable, peaceful world with 30 nuclear powers.

So what's the middle ground? The middle ground is being able to get all of the major powers, including Russia and China and Europe and U.S. agreeing on sanctions. And here, just very quickly, I mean, the one bit of good news is that low oil prices are a huge strength for us in this respect because Iran really is hurting with \$40-a-barrel oil.

MR. LUSTIG: We are nearly out of time, believe it or not. But I want to get a quick closing thought from each of you because not long ago, I noticed the New York Times ran two articles on two successive days about what to expect from an Obama administration. One article referred to what it called a sweeping shift in foreign policy under President Obama. The other forecast continuity. So in just a couple of sentences from each of you, which do you think it'll be – a sweeping shift or continuity? Ambassador Collins?

MR. COLLINS: I think it will be a sweeping shift in style and approach and probably a great deal more continuity on much of the substance.

MR. LUSTIG: Robert Kagan?

MR. KAGAN: As always in American foreign policy, it will be continuity.

MR. LUSTIG: Because?

MR. KAGAN: Because the fundamental attributes of the American character have not changed and because Barack Obama did not run on a brand new paradigm of foreign policy. He ran on a different approach and style, as Jim says, and I think he'll implement that. And I don't want to underestimate the importance of that. It can be important. But in terms of completely – you know, in substantially reorienting the American approach to the world, I don't see it.

MR. LUSTIG: George Perkovich, continuity or shift?

MR. PERKOVICH: I agree with everything my colleagues said and would add that in each of the issues that we talked about, or most of the issues we talked about, the key question – or a key question is what do the other actors – the North Koreans, the Iranians, the Chinese, the Pakistanis – what do they want to do? What are they prepared to do? And the election in the United States doesn't necessarily change their interest or what they're prepared to do and we can't force them to do something different.

MR. LUSTIG: Jessica Mathews?

MS. MATHEWS: Sweeping shift – not just on style – sweeping shift on content.

MR. LUSTIG: Sweeping shift in content, in policy?

MS. MATHEWS: Absolutely.

MR. LUSTIG: On which issues specifically, just briefly?

MS. MATHEWS: On any number – the – starting with the whole American approach to the world, on the question of whether you engage with your enemies or not. I see very few issues – I'd turn it around – very few issues on which I'd expect continuity. I expect a high degree of continuity of American relationship with China, for example and some other important issues but on most of them, I expect dramatic change.

MR. LUSTIG: Well, on that note, we must, I'm afraid, leave it. So my thanks to Jessica Mathews, to Robert Kagan, to George Perkovich, to James Collins. Of course, my thanks too, to the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, our host tonight. We are going to continue our discussion, now, off air. We're going to take some questions from our audience here. If you'd like a chance to hear that, you can do so because it will be on our website at [bbc.co.uk/worldtonight](http://bbc.co.uk/worldtonight). I'm going to be writing about some of the issues that we've raised this evening in our newsletter, which will be out tomorrow, also on my blog – that's at [bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldtonight](http://bbc.co.uk/blogs/worldtonight).

(Applause.)

Thank you all very much.

(Cross talk.)

MR. LUSTIG: As I say, we are, now, available to take some questions from you. There is a roving microphone there. If you would raise your hand so I can see how many people and where they are wish to ask questions, please do so. I see a couple on this side. Do I see of you on that side? Okay, I will start on this side. One at the front and one – I'll take three questions in succession and then we'll get answers. This one here, first, in the front, please.

Q: Shall I pick a person to ask or –

MR. LUSTIG: Yeah, by all means, identify who you want to answer it.

Q: All right. My name is Uriah Ferruccio and this is for Robert Kagan. A lot of people speak nowadays about China's rising role in Africa. As someone's who's an expert on the Middle East, I'd like to you comment on whether or not China's role is rising there and if so, briefly speak about how it might.

MR. LUSTIG: Okay, thank you. And there was a gentleman a few row – yes, gentleman there.

Q: So anyone can choose to answer. Insofar as you believe the aid agenda is an important part of a foreign policy agenda, how do you see the Obama administration maintaining public support for aid, both in this country and internationally, at a time of such crisis?

MR. LUSTIG: Thank you and one more a few rows back. Somebody else had their hand up – yeah.

Q: Yes, this is for all panelists. Do you foresee a shift in the Obama administration towards Cuba and their approach towards that regime?

MR. LUSTIG: Thank you. Okay, let's take some answers to that first of all: Bob Kagan, China and Africa.

MR. KAGAN: Actually, it was China and Middle East was the question, right?

MR. LUSTIG: I beg your pardon, I'm sorry.

MR. KAGAN: No, no, no, no because my expertise is so wide-ranging that it's – (laughter) – from climate-change proposals – (laughter). I think it's inevitable. I think, first of all, China's involvement in the Middle East is already increasing and it's inevitable that it will increase more, you know, whoever that guy who said why do you rob banks? Who was that?

MR. COLLINS: Willie Sutton.

MR. KAGAN: Willie Sutton, right. Well, that's where the oil is. China needs a lot of oil. I think that any rising great power in China's position would want to have influence there. They clearly have deepened their energy relationship with Iran, which is going to be an obstacle to achieving the kind of, you know, pressure that I think that Obama administration would like to put on Iran.

I think it is one of those one-off accidents that we've now sort of invited China to use its navy off the coast of the Horn of Africa and you know, to chase down pirates. And I remember when the American navies chased down pirates in Asia and then it somehow never left, you know? I mean, these things take on a life of their own and I think it's inevitable that China will see that influence and will increasingly have the capacity to wield that influence. And I would also expect that if the United States were to sort of lose its cache in the Middle East even more than it already has, but it could – including with some of the regimes that are now friendly to us, it's possible that it's trying to grow stronger. Some of these regimes will look to China as a counterbalancing.

I mean one thing that Middle East history suggests is they're always sucking in external powers to play them off against each other and give themselves some more freedom of maneuver so I would expect China to be a candidate for that.

MR. LUSTIG: Anybody else want to say anything on that one specifically? Okay, on public support for aid – George?

MR. PERKOVICH: (Chuckles.) I was rolling my eyes. (Laughter.) I think it's a great question. I have no idea – I used – I mean, I used to work on the Hill a long time ago and there wasn't an economic crisis like this and you weren't – I mean, you think about the fight over, you know, aiding the auto industry in the U.S. and that largely unresolved and the opposition to that, so –

MR. KAGAN: There's already been a letter put out by Republicans saying we have to freeze the aid budget now because that's part of the – I mean, it's so – the marginal difference is so small compared to the kind of money we're talking about. But it's inevitably an easy political button to push. But I'm relatively optimistic with a Democratic Congress and Democratic president that they can hold the line on aid.

MR. COLLINS: I think the short answer is, with difficulty.

MR. KAGAN: Right.

MS. MATHEWS: No, I – this is an issue on which the power of words make a difference. The ability to move people, the ability to describe a priority of purpose and goals – his ability to capture a sense of direction in a way that reaches people, I think, makes a huge difference on this issue, potentially. And his ability to see the United States the way other people outside the United States see it that comes from his own personal experience, I think, will make a big difference. In Washington, the need is going to be to rewrite the aid bill, which is covered with so many barnacles that there's just no way to have a coherent program. Whether you would do that at a time when you've got 6 million other priorities, that's a really tough question.

MR. LUSTIG: Who wants to talk about Cuba?

MR. PERKOVICH: Well, I would only make one – well, two points – I mean, one point on Cuba, which is that there are actuarial issues that would suggest a change. (Laughter.) In other words, Castro's really, really old. (Laughter.) And so –

MR. LUSTIG: Actuarial issues. (Laughter.)

MR. PERKOVICH: That could bring about a change and I think there are intonations that there's also an understanding that you need to change for a variety of reasons. And Venezuela might be a reason to also change in the sense of to better isolate Venezuela, changing approach to –

MS. MATHEWS: There are indications that they are already exploring this.

MR. KAGAN: I'm sure they would like to do it. The only question is would it be fall victim to Jessica's point, which is that when you wanted to change policy toward Cuba, you want to do it in the first six months of the administration because the closer you get to – you know, that's the rule. The problem is you want to do all things in the first six months of the administration also and I think that if McCain had won, he also would have wanted to try to change policy toward Cuba. But the question is how many, you know, how many irons are you going to have in the fire at any one time?

MS. MATHEWS: This is a critical point because the key failing of Democratic administrations is trying to do too many things at once. I mean, without any exception. That's the name of the game.

MR. KAGAN: And the key failure of the Republican administration is to try to do anything. (Laughter.)

MR. COLLINS: I think there's one other point we all need to keep in mind. And that is that the elephant in the room here is the economy and the whole financial crisis. It is going to take so much energy and time that it will affect almost the entire agenda. And it – by the way, as an indirect point about the aid question, it seems to me if you ask almost any government or any society today, what do they want from the Americans is probably not aid. It's to get the economy fixed. And that is going to be the biggest challenge facing this administration.

MR. LUSTIG: Any more questions? Right, this side of the room has woken up. (Laughter.) One, two, three.

Q: Thank you. Andreas Behnke, University of Reading, U.K. A question to Jessica Mathews – given your expectations of substantial shift and changes and in light of the nomination of Susan Rice, what are your expectations toward – for the Obama administration’s policy towards Sudan and Darfur?

MR. LUSTIG: Okay, gentleman there – yep.

Q: Yes, given the financial crisis, just how are you going to be able to finance the Defense Department at the same level we’re doing now? Do you see substantial –

(Cross talk, laughter.)

MR. LUSTIG: One more, yeah, towards the back there.

Q: This is to all the panelists. How does Obama’s world view affect the U.S. democracy-promotion agenda? How will Obama’s world view affect the U.S. democracy-promotion efforts?

MR. LUSTIG: Darfur, Sudan?

MS. MATHEWS: Well, I am not an expert on either but I will say this. I mean one of the profound differences I think between this administration and the last one is that this one believes in diplomacy and the last one didn’t and had really no confidence in its ability to achieve its ends through the practice of diplomacy. This is a very profound characteristic that I think is easy to lose sight of when you’re, you know, you’re constantly talking about Iraq or Iran or North Korea or whatever. But I see that as one of the many dramatic points of –

(Cross talk.)

MR. LUSTIG: – diplomacy would be what? With China or directly with the president of Sudan?

MS. MATHEWS: My guess it would have a great deal to do with our European allies and also this will be – and if there is any central, clear message from the transition so far, it is pragmatism. I mean it’s hard to find an ideological bone in any of the bodies that have been appointed. And our policies in Sudan, I think, certainly were deeply affected by ideological bias and I expect to see that changed. I mean, so that’s a broad answer, in a way.

MR. LUSTIG: Anybody else on that? Okay, when you sought a bailout for the Pentagon, yeah, on –

MR. KAGAN: Well, I mean, you talk about how we’re going to finance anything. We’re about to run a \$50 trillion deficit. What do you mean how are we going to finance anything? I mean, we could easily throw the Pentagon into that package too. Look, it’s going to be hard not to continue spending money, even with a change of administration because we are not talking about

liquidating our involvements now, in Afghanistan and in Iraq. I don't see any part of the world where Obama has run on reducing America's military role. I didn't see a diminution – in fact, I mean, if you look at campaign statements, I don't recall Barack Obama calling for a reduction in the defense budget and in fact, I think he called for an increase in the defense budget. Now, obviously, things have changed since he was running. But I don't expect, you know, there'll be a run-out in Congress. But I don't expect people to cut substantially the current defense budget.

MR. LUSTIG: All in agreement on that? Third question, I'm afraid I didn't catch what the question was.

MR. PERKOVICH: Democracy-promotion agenda.

MR. LUSTIG: Oh, okay.

MR. PERKOVICH: And here, it's like if I had a wish, it would be that Tom Carothers, who's a colleague of ours, were here to answer that question because he's kind of the leading figure on that. But I think what he might say and just one sentence because I don't want to screw it up beyond one sentence. You know, would be that – pragmatic. I mean, that's one word. (Laughter.) You know, and in the sense of not the kind of expectation people might have that you come in with a sweeping, major campaign and initiative on this but rather really assessing what works, what doesn't work, how do people abroad interpret the word, the idea of democracy promotion as opposed to other ways to framing it and so I wouldn't expect any major –

MR. KAGAN: It's such a strange issue because the Bush administration had this incredible soaring rhetoric about democracy promotion and precious little to show for actual democracy promotion so you don't have to reverse policies. You just have to, you know, cool down the rhetoric. Now, having said that –

MS. MATHEWS: Whoa, rhetoric is policy.

MR. KAGAN: No, okay, I'm sorry. But in terms of whether they're going to promote a more or less activist democracy promotion policy, I can't think of a country where they could do much less. (Laughter.) Okay? You know, Egypt was supposed to be a big showpiece and Condi Rice gave the big speech and then we kind of forgot all about it. And Lebanon was their big showpiece which kind of happened by mistake and so I haven't been overly blown away. I will say it's a lot easier to say we are not in the democracy-promotion business than it is actually to execute a policy that does not take these issues into account.

And I do think that in Egypt, this administration's probably going to face some very serious decisions about whether we're going to move from Mubarak the father to Mubarak the son. How do we feel about that? You know, the pharaohs of Egypt and that's going to be a tough issue. And I do think that I would be very surprised – and I'm sorry, maybe Jim will disagree with this but I don't think Russia's internal policies are going to be a matter there. It's going to be completely ignored by this administration. I think it's inevitably going to be some kind of issue. It may not be the determinate issue but it is going to shape policy to some extent.

MR. COLLINS: Well, I mean I think it's fair to say that it's almost impossible to conduct a policy with any country without having this play a role. And we've found that to be true over

several administrations in my experience. So it will be a factor in the relationship with Russia and the other parts of that region. The question is to what degree you would try to be very prescriptive about specific outcomes and if you don't achieve that outcome, you have problems that spread into other areas. I would think we're going to see a great deal more pragmatism in that regard and I –

MR. KAGAN: Regarding what?

MR. COLLINS: (Laughter.) In the sense of the rhetoric. I mean –

MS. MATHEWS: A lot of rhetoric and no policy is the worst combination –

MR. KAGAN: I know, but on Russia, we haven't had democracy rhetoric at all. We've been – Putin's our pal, you know?

MR. COLLINS: No, I beg to differ. I mean the entire mood of the country in the media, which is not contradicted by the administration, has been very, very tough on the Russians, it seems to me, in this regard.

MR. LUSTIG: Jessica Mathews, do you think there's going to be rhetoric on promotion of democracy?

MS. MATHEWS: No, I doubt it. I mean, well, I mean, I expect President Obama – I expect he's going to do an early speech in, you know, maybe in Indonesia, wherever. And I would certainly expect there to be words about the elements of governance that he thinks are important. But making – change towards democracy, which in this administration, did become a euphemism for regime change, that will change. And I call that sweeping change. (Chuckles.)

MR. LUSTIG: Okay. Two more quick ones and then we're going to let these good people go. One, two.

Q: My name is Mohammed Saeed and I would like to revisit Dr. Susan Rice approach to Africa, which is, I disagree with Jessica because Susan Rice clearly wrote in the Washington Post with Tony Lake and Congressman Don Payne that – (inaudible) – to intervention in Sudan very clearly and my question here was the theory of the team of rivals, how that will fit with Senator Clinton, which might be going to do the diplomacy of that – that is my question.

MR. LUSTIG: Okay, thank you, and the gentleman here.

Q: My name is Robert –

MR. LUSTIG: Could you just use the microphone please, sir? It's to your right.

Q: My name is Robert McNamara. I have a question for George Perkovich. Shifting the topic to nuclear weapons, he's recently published a book which I haven't read yet. My question is, does he believe they can be abolished and if so, should we try?

MR. LUSTIG: Jessica Mathews, Susan Rice, Hillary Clinton.

MS. MATHEWS: Well, I think that you've probably put your finger on one of the – one of the policy debates that will develop and it goes back to this question of how much can we afford to do? I think Susan Rice has – does have a clear and strong position and she has been a very, very close advisor. Whether the United States follows – ultimately follows that route, I wouldn't put money on it. You know?

I just – we have – we have – there has never been – at least since Harry Truman, maybe, a foreign-policy inbox that looks like this one. It's awful and he's got two wars already. He's got five or six what you'd call really hot crises. He's got a global recession. You know, how much can we afford to do? And I – you know, this guy seems to be really smart about deploying resources, you know? I mean throughout this campaign, it's one of the things you had to really admire is how brilliantly he conceived and deployed resources. I said before and I do agree that the, you know, the fatal mistake of most Democratic administrations is to try to do too much. But maybe this guy's different.

MR. LUSTIG: George.

MR. PERKOVICH: Thanks, Secretary McNamara. Yeah, I think first of all, it's very important that the U.S. be seen not to cling to nuclear weapons and not to want to brandish them, first of all. Secondly, physically, they can be eliminated. The question is political – you know this better than I. So the third point was – is I think we absolutely should try to eliminate them because the conditions that would have to be created in order to bring us to that point – and this isn't unilateral, so it's the U.S., it's Russia, it's China, the U.K., France, India, Pakistan, Israel would all have to do it. The conditions that would be necessary for them all to do that are so advantageous to global security in any case it's worthwhile to try to create those conditions. And if you succeed incrementally, you can eliminate them, we're all better off. But nothing's lost for trying to create those conditions. So I think that's clearly the direction we should move in.

MR. LUSTIG: There, I'm going to draw proceedings to a close. Thank you all very much indeed. Thank you particularly to my panelists.

(Applause.)

Let me just say to you, if you do want to listen to it again online, the URL is [www.bbc.co.uk/worldtonight](http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldtonight). Thank you all very much indeed, good night.

(END)