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**Obstinate or Obsolete?
The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship**

Europe, the United States, and the Next American President
Conference
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Stanley Hoffmann
Paul and Catherine Battenwieser University Professor
Harvard University

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Introduction

This Bologna Center Occasional Paper is from a taped transcript as part of a conference at the Bologna Center. Apart from editing for obvious errors in the oral presentaton, this transcript is verbatim.

Kenneth H. Keller

Director and Professor, Johns Hopkins University SAIS Bologna Center

Good afternoon. Let me welcome those of you from the community who are visiting with us as well as our students. As all of you know the Johns Hopkins Center in Bologna was founded in 1955, for the purpose of promoting a transatlantic dialogue to encourage and continue a close relationship between the United States and Europe. It's a goal that we have pursued for 54 years, relatively unchanged even as almost everything else has changed; we've seen the end of the Cold War, we've seen the emergence of Asia as an area of intense interest, both to the United States and Europe, we've seen enormous changes within the United States, and we've seen enormous changes in Europe. And we've also seen changes in the Bologna Center. As time has gone on we've seen more and more that our role is not merely one of teaching, as important as that is, but providing a venue for conversation and debate about a range of issues that are of growing importance both to the United States and Europe, even if they do not directly concern the relationship between the two centers of power. In that sense, in fact, we do not only teach about policy, we engage in the discussion we must have as we formulate policy. I often argue that, where before we took as a goal the promotion of the transatlantic dialogue, it now has become less a goal than a means to allow and encourage the United States and Europe to talk about a set of issues that are much broader than either of them: problems of security, or problems of energy and the environment, or technology transfer, or development, or trade, or any of the number of things that now confront both centers of power. And so we see an increasing importance in our organizing conferences, organizing symposia, providing opportunities in which experts can come and discuss with us these new issues, and contribute ultimately to the actions that both the United States and Europe will take. That, I suggest, is what we are about today. Certainly there are

enough issues before us; we obviously have an election about to take place in the United States, we have strong views about that here in Europe, as well as in the United States. Indeed, although the term “Europe” may trip off my tongue, it is not exactly clear what that may mean. The European Union is composed of 27 countries; Europe can be even thought of as much more broad than that. So what we plan to do here in the next several hours is bring together people who can give us some comments and insight, and perhaps some agenda setting, for what will go on in these next years after the American election is settled, after the economic crisis works itself out, after the new crises that we don’t know about arise and are settled. You’ll hear from some wonderful speakers in these panels this afternoon and I am glad to see you all here to participate in and enjoy the discussion. We are very happy to be hosting this conference.

Panelists

Erik Jones, Moderator for Session I
Professor of European Studies, Johns
Hopkins University SAIS Bologna Center

John Harper
Professor of American Foreign Policy
and European Studies Johns Hopkins
University, SAIS Bologna Center

Kathleen Burk
Professor of Modern and
Contemporary History, University
College of London

Detlief Junker
Distinguished Senior Professor,
University of Heidelberg and Founder,
Heidelberg Center for American Studies

Marco Cesa, Moderator for Session II
Professor of International Relations
Johns Hopkins University
SAIS Bologna Center

Pierre Hassner
Research Associate at Centre d’Études
et de Recherches Internationales
(CERI) and Lecturer in International
Relations at the Institut d’Études
Politiques de Paris

Leopold Nuti
Professor of History of International
Relations and Coordinator of the
International Studies Section, Doctoral
School in Political Science,
University of Roma Tre

Kenneth Keller: I really have a very hard task at the moment, because as some of you may know, a rule of thumb is that the length of an introduction should be inversely proportional to the stature of the speaker. For example, apropos of the theme of this conference, when the President of the United States appears you don't go over his CV; you say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States." That may be a bit abrupt as an approach in introducing Professor Hoffmann but the other extreme is to take the whole hour to tell you his background and his accomplishments, and that also has its problems. So I'll try to find an intermediate route here to introduce a man who is clearly one of the distinguished scholars of his generation, somebody for whom, so many of us, all of us here, have such great respect. A few facts: Stanley Hoffmann is the Paul and Catherine Buitendyk University Professor at Harvard, where he has taught since 1955. He has been chairman of Harvard's Center for European Studies from its creation in 1969 to 1995. He was born in Vienna, he lived and studied in France until 1955 and at Harvard, I love this line, he teaches "French Intellectual and Political History, American Foreign Policy, Post World War II European History, the Sociology of War, International Politics, Ethics and World Affairs, Modern Political Ideologies, and the Development of the Modern State." That's right. A bit like Gilbert and Sullivan's Lord Pooh-Bah, who carried the title Lord High Everything Else. He is the recipient of many international recognitions, including; the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Adolph Bentinck Prize, the Balzan Prize in International Relations, and the title of *Commandeur* of the National Order of the Legion of Honour, the highest civilian honor awarded in France. *Niente male*, as we say. At lunch, well actually earlier today, Hoffmann spoke of the influence of McGeorge Bundy on him when he took a course from him early on. Pierre Hassner mentioned Michael Howard in the same vein. There is in our field an important relationship between mentors and mentees, people who influence other people's lives. And I think what is important to know is that for over half a century Stanley Hoffmann has influenced many,

many people in this room, and throughout the world. They have gathered from him an understanding of what political science should be about, and he has brought to it a kind of uniqueness, a sense of history, insight, subtlety, judgment, a bit of irony, and, I think all of that makes him both a wonderful speaker, a man of deep insight, and a very important figure. It's my pleasure to introduce him here to speak to us on the subject "Obstinate or Obsolete: The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship." Professor Hoffmann.

Obstinate or Obsolete?

The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship

Keynote lecture by
Stanley Hoffmann

Paul and Catherine Buitendijk University Professor, Harvard University

Thank you very much. I want you to know that I'm not responsible for the title. That was selected, I imagine, by my friend Marco. It refers to a very old article I have almost entirely forgotten, but which had to do with the developments within what was not yet the European Union. Before I begin, I want to pay just a word of tribute to our mentor, Pierre Hassner and myself, who was Raymond Aron. It's just a few days after the 25th anniversary of his death, and even though I've not always been an entirely faithful disciple, I don't think I would be what I am without the influence of somebody who was an absolutely extraordinary teacher, who may have been rather difficult, I imagine, as a colleague, but whose relationship with his students is something which I have tried to emulate. He was always available to them, in an academic milieu, a French one, in which there is a thick wall sometimes made of glass, and sometimes made of cement, between the teachers and the students. Aron, to me, was exemplary not only as an extraordinary universal scholar but also as a human being. You would come to him and he would ask you, "What do you think about this or that event?" And I would say: "What I thought is that. . . ." "*Vous n'avez rien compris!*" And then followed a 45-minute lecture, improvised. I have never seen anything like this since then; the man was absolutely fantastic, and I still miss him. He was the salt of the earth.

Since we have to talk about European American relations, I can only begin by quoting Pascal, “*Tout est dit et on viens plus tard.*” Everything has been said, and I come too late. Which, as you well know, will not prevent me from continuing. The next thing I want to say is entirely personal. I hope that there’s no journalist here who will do to me what an English journalist did to my friend Samantha Power, who made the mistake of telling another journalist that what she was now going to say should be off the record—at which point she said that she thought Mrs. Clinton was a monster. And it appeared the next day in all the newspapers, so she lost her position in the Obama camp. But I must say that the last eight years of living in America have been very painful, for reasons which have been mentioned. I was thinking that, retrospectively, the worst years of my life were during the Nazi occupation of France. Those lasted only four years. We’ve had eight years of Bush. The last years have been a little bit less horrible than the beginning. But it really was very, very hard for somebody who had come from Europe and had a certain idea of America to go through this: the lies, the deception, the violations of public liberties, the general tone of contempt for everybody else in the world, the photos of Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. This has not been a happy period. So don’t be entirely surprised if I’m a little biased, but I am. And we all have our biases, and we might as well announce them before we talk.

Well, let me make a few preliminary remarks on this transatlantic relationship, then say a few things about the uncertainties which we now face. And the third, and last part, will be on the issues. Two preliminary remarks: the first one is that we are dealing with—if we can take the European Union as a single power, which obviously we cannot, but just for the exercise—then we are dealing with two allies without a foreign policy, which is really quite remarkable. The United States has not had one for a little while. There was one, a very strong one, in the first Bush Administration. This was the age of this very strange combination of hard-nosed realists, *à la* Rumsfeld, realists who thought they could contain Iraq with 150,000 men, and the neoconservatives. Which, I think, if you ever study this

period, will tell you absolutely everything about what is wrong with pure ideologies; they had no relationship to reality at all. And that's fine, if one isn't in power, and if one simply writes in newspapers, as many of them did and some continue to do with the same irresponsibility. But if you are in power, there a few penalties and prices one has to pay. But at least it was a foreign policy, it was unilateralism tinged with a mixture of historical contempt for Europe, which went quite deep in many cases, even though some of them had their villas in France. I could give names.

This started disappearing after our Congress returned to Democratic majorities in 2006. For the last two years there has really not been a unified foreign policy; it still ranges from a few remaining neoconservatives, to people like the present Secretary of Defense Gates, who would be perfectly at home, I think, in other administrations, to Condi Rice, who is an exceedingly articulate person whose capacity to adopt the fashionable line is astonishing. I knew her when she was a hard-nosed realist. I knew her when she discovered the virtues of universal democracy. I don't know exactly where she's floating now, but I think she has preferred one mode of locomotion, which many members of the administration have used in recent months, and that's the airplane. So she is rarely there. Anyhow, so at this point there really is no American foreign policy, and it is something. I almost feel some sympathy watching the president addressing the American people, practically every other day, with absolutely nobody paying any attention whatsoever. I don't know what's happened to his famous communication, not with his father, but with the higher father that he once mentioned to Mr. Woodward, but there's something wrong with that communication for the time being.

So we are in ad hocism, and there we are. On the European side, of course, there is still no—there hasn't been since the beginning of European integration—there's still no single European foreign policy or united foreign policy. And there is a sort of double rift among the members. There is a sort of gap between the old

members, those who have been in it from the beginning, and the more recent ones, after the fall of the Soviet Union, who as was said by a number of people here, remain closer to the United States. And then there is a rift between those who are more and those who are less integrationist. But the result is there really is no common foreign policy. I'm going to teach a seminar with two colleagues, a German and a Frenchman, in spring on what is called in the Harvard catalog, *The Foreign Policies of Europe*. There is no single foreign policy.

The second point, or the second preliminary remark, is that I think there is a sort of end, at least for the time being, of the closeness, which was so remarkable, even in periods of tension, between the United States and the Europeans for so many years after World War II. The United States at present, in what is left of its foreign policy, has sort of a huge headache, to which I'll come back, which is what to do with the Middle East in general. They have another worry, which is new, and began even before the famous economic meltdown, which is the obvious march towards something, which Americans do not like, and have wanted to excommunicate for years and years, which is multipolarity. One of the bones of contention between the French and Americans has been that the French, for reasons which are in fact perfectly understandable, always prefer the multipolar system since they were no longer one of the great powers. And the Americans have never liked this at all. Each time Chirac, and before that de Gaulle, mentioned the possibility of a multipolar world, there was the strong sniff of disappointment, of disapproval, coming from Washington.

And yet it is very clear that the rise of Asia and in particular the rise of China, and the development of India, is something which the Americans cannot deny. They are events of considerable importance. They cannot deny that Russia, and Putin at least, is a power that one has to take, again, seriously into account. And this is a worry that comes before worrying about the latest vicissitudes in Italian politics. There used to be a time when Americans were very worried about Italy.

There was an ambassador who should remain nameless, an American ambassador who kept coming to the Center for European Studies at Harvard, probably about twice a year, to tell us all his achievements against the communists, “Me and the communists.” So we would listen to him. He would, incidentally, have in front of him a page, (very imprudent because I looked over his shoulder), in which there were the names of the Italian politicians on whom the Americans could count on in Italy. It went from left to right; be reassured, it wasn’t exclusively on the right. It included lots of socialists; it didn’t include any communists, needless to say. But it was, “Me versus Italy. I’ve been sent here to save this country for the West, OK, finished.” And this is not what Americans are thinking about at this point.

So this kind of closeness is over, but above all I think the main, lasting reason for the end of closeness (and I’ll come back to the others), is the absolute domestic priorities of the United States. I’m not going to give you a lecture on it, on the situation of the United States as a country, but it’s terrible. This is a great country whose infrastructure is in ruins, in which people don’t really want to spend money on it. So that you have bridges collapsing, you have Katrina, you have potholes in every street. I mean, it is extraordinary, nothing works. This used to be the country in which everything worked; it’s no longer the case. And since it happened very gradually, step-by-step, people have barely noticed it. They notice it when they can’t escape noticing it anymore, which doesn’t mean that they are ready to take the measures for it. But I was struck again coming back to Europe, for the fourth time this year, never more than a week at that, that you are much better off. And that is, you know, a shock. It’s a wonderful shock when you are here, but it is really very, very different from what used to be the case. So this is something, which will have to be taken care of, whoever is president.

And as for the European side, part of this sort of sense of distance from the U.S. is the fall in American popularity that has been mentioned. And also the fact that

most preoccupations among European elites are what, I would call, the hiccups, to use a polite term, of the European Union, including the fate of two consecutive treaties, one of which was too long thanks to Monsieur Giscard D'Estaing and the other one was unreadable, because too many lawyers voted. And when one has to go to referendums there is a law, which these people obviously ignored, which is that one law should be readable. But nothing was simple and clear, and so you have this arrested growth, which makes a coherent EU policy very difficult, as we see now, every day. So, in other words, for each one of those two partners the other is not a top priority, for the time being.

Now what are the main uncertainties? Well they are all uncertainties about future U.S. foreign policy, which was mentioned. McCain is not exactly a profound revisionist of past American foreign policies. His tone is awfully familiar—it's "we are the best nation in the world, we are the greatest thing that has ever existed, and *wenn bist du nicht willig, so brauch ich Gewalt*. We have the force to demonstrate it, if we need to. And force is in every speech, as the moment when he talks about military force. Again, one doesn't have to be married to a psychologist to realize that his five years in the Hilton Hotel in Hanoi have marked him very deeply. He is after all the son and grandson of high military figures. And in his talks, military power comes always as *the* instrument, I don't think he knows much about the possible other ones, he has not read enough to know about soft power. And what is so striking in his talk is that it is dominated by this sort of notion of neo-containment of Russia. At least, he has some reservations about how far he wants to go: his vice presidential choice has already talked about war with Russia. She has no inhibitions about anything. So both this emphasis on winning and on force, and this emphasis on, sort of, a new Cold War causes very serious tensions with Europe.

Obama, well, there's a lot to be said about the uncertainties of his foreign policy, we don't really know what it will be. He suffers from something which is rather

exceptional: too many advisers. He has 300 foreign policy advisers, which is a great recipe for cacophony. Three is too little, 30 might be a good number, 300 is a promise of complete confusion. I'm a little bit worried about what this might mean. In a sense, he has from many others, one possible choice, which I'm afraid of, which is kind of a return to the American foreign policy of the '90s, of the Clinton era. What has happened, which I think was quite predictable, after the disappearance of Hillary Clinton from the race, is that the democratic establishment, the foreign policy establishment, which still dominates many of the think tanks in Washington, has all come to him and swaddled him in a sense. There is some of this if one looks at some of his statements: It's a line that was read by someone I like very much on a personal plane, who is Madeleine Albright: "We are the indispensable nation. We are the only ones who know how to lead." It's as if we were still in the '90s. The only person who is not in that group because he has made himself a little bit too unpopular with absolutely everybody else, is Richard Holbrooke, thank goodness, but his spirit still lives, so to speak. And so that's one possibility which I think would be unfortunate.

The other one, which certainly was represented as long as she was his official adviser, was by Samantha Power, somebody for whom I have an enormous amount of sympathy and affection, which was, essentially, to switch to the common problems of mankind; the problems of the environment, the problems of energy, the problems of human rights, which she has so beautifully written about in her two books, which are a very different sort of foreign policy. And we don't really know. What he has said during his campaign has worried a number of us, Pierre Hassner being one of them. I'm not sure how much it really commits him. I think he had to show that he could be tough. And I think as he has chosen, quite courageously, not to be tough on Iraq and talk about a fairly rapid disengagement, maybe his rather imprudent stance on Afghanistan was a way of compensating for it. But to the extent to which one is usually committed by one's words, even when those words are mistakes, I worry about it. Many of us worry about it,

we don't know. So it's essentially too soon to tell. I think McCain is all too predictable. Obama, on foreign policy, is simply not. Will foreign policy in fact be at all a top priority for Obama?

Originally, it wasn't clear that he wanted that at all. There's one reason why foreign policy will be important for Obama, and it's not one which is usually mentioned because he's been very mum about it in his campaign. If he wants to do what he wants to do *within* the United States, the only way in which he can find any money at all, especially under present circumstances of the last months, is by drastically reducing the military budget. Now, you can't say that in your election campaign, it seems, so he has not, but there's nowhere else in which he will be able to find money for all the things he has promised to accomplish. And remember that this is a country with 47 million people with no health insurance, in which there are what are not called in America "ghettos," in which there are very, very high figures of crimes, and drug trafficking, in which many of the schools remain far below anything which might be tolerated in many European countries. And if he wants to find the money for this, which he has essentially presented himself for, he will have to do something with the military budget, which is higher than that of the rest of the world combined. This has been a very well-kept secret during his election campaign. So we don't know.

As for Europe and world affairs, it seems to me that what we see, by reading the newspapers, that there is still a large number of different attitudes. Since France is currently the head of the EU, Sarkozy's attitude has been one of common action. It was much less so before France took that position. With Sarkozy (I'm not going to get into a psychoanalysis of Sarkozy, I'm not competent), it's one of extreme mobility. I've never seen anybody that has such a propensity for resolving problems by taking the plane for the next available country and leaving the difficulties to his ministers. But at least it's been a policy for a common EU attitude. At the other end, you have Mrs. Merkel who exhibited a certain national-

ism, which came for many as a surprise, since Germany had been, even when there were the difficulties between Germany and France under Kohl, usually quite willing to compromise. She's taken the hard nationalist line, on the whole. And then halfway in between there has been Brown, who has found in the crisis a sort of new source of rejuvenation, which he badly needed. But it means that the weakness of the institutions of the EU will continue. And one keeps postponing the very painful moment when one will have to look again at the institutions and decide what to do, we're left—the Irish have left—the whole EU dangling now for several months.

So let me end with some remarks about issues. The current ones: I think many of them, the most difficult, are those of the Middle East. Iraq clearly remains a U.S. problem, everybody else has tip-toed away from this disaster. And there is here a very clear choice between McCain and Obama. Obama seems to be quite willing not to let himself be intimidated by the prestige of General Petraeus. And Petraeus has done some very remarkable things in Iraq. However, what anybody, including members of the administration who have been in Iraq, or are responsible for some of it, what they all are saying is that it is extraordinarily fragile and that the progress that has been made is extremely reversible. The fact that from now on it is going to be the Shiites, and not the Americans, who will have to pay the Sunnis for no longer fighting, given the tenderness that the Shiites have toward the Sunnis, is not very promising. I heard very recently a man, who is remarkable in that he is both assistant secretary of defense and assistant secretary of state, who gave a remarkably nuanced picture of what goes on there. He was extremely pessimistic, and he made it very clear, although it seemed to have come as a discovery to him, that the Iraqi government wants its sovereignty back and wants the Americans out. Finally somebody understood, so to speak. It came a little late. But it does mean that it is still quite reversible and it's not over and there will be battles about how fast one can withdraw and so on.

Afghanistan. I think what is quite striking at present is not only the confusion on the ground, which is enormous, but one thing that is remarkable, since we've talked about this special relationship, which is the reluctance of many of the British. There is every year a distinguished representative of Her Majesty's government at Harvard, the one who's there this year, along with the new head of Harvard's Center for Human Rights, is Rory Stewart, who is a Scot, who has written two absolutely marvelous books. Their advice is: "Don't send more troops. It is pointless. It is such a mess. It is very different from Iraq, the Petraeus method would not work, we don't know what could work, and therefore sending more troops is hopeless." Now, it's not a very positive line of advice, but it is a very remarkable one because it goes against, in a sense, both Obama and McCain. But they make a very good point, that nobody seems to know what to do with it.

My own advice about both Iraq and Afghanistan, and also I would say what to do with Iran, which is to essentially tell the United States to get out of the mess, let them cook in their own juices so to speak. The more the United States plays a role there, the more it breeds anti-Americanism or fanaticism or Al-Qaeda, with very little that the United States can do about it. If there is ever an area for disengagement it would be this. In the case of Iran, the policy consists of telling the Iranians: (a) either you do what we want you to do or we bomb you and (b) what we want you to do is to give absolutely everything we ask for without any negotiation, after that we'll negotiate. But first you give us your guarantee that you are not going to continue to do what you are perfectly justified under the non-proliferation treaty to do. This is not a policy.

So the one area where I think the United States should fully engage, while disengaging from the somewhat poisonous rest of the Middle East, is, of course, the Israeli dispute. This deserves more books than just the one, which was quite valuable in breaking a taboo, by Steve Walt and Mearsheimer. There, the fact that every American president has discovered the Arab-Israeli, or Palestinian-Israeli

problem, just at the end of the mandate, without any preparation, has been a disaster. But that was of course the best way of avoiding being excommunicated by AIPAC and Mr. Dershowitz, and soon, many others. Dershowitz has now taken poor President Carter as his latest target. But there, I think, there should be a full engagement. Everybody knows what the terms of the solution must be. Olmert, who did nothing while he was prime minister, given the fragility of the government, has been extraordinarily candid from the day he left office. Again, along [these] lines—if I may quote myself for a second, I hope you will forgive me. In 1975, I wrote an article in *Foreign Affairs* about what might be a good solution to that particular problem. I haven't written anything since because it remains entirely valid, so what's the point of it? I had a colleague once who was a Nobel prize winner in economics, Wassily Leontieff, who spoke Russian in every language, and we once toured French universities to talk about the social sciences in France. He made the same speech for everybody whom he saw and the third member of that group, who was a lovely Polish psychologist teaching in England, said to him one day, "You know, you repeat yourself an awful lot?" and he said, "What's wrong? If you have a good idea, repeat it!" Well, we know what has to be done in this business, and if there isn't a very strong American intervention and pressure, nothing will be done. So that's the one area which I still think is a lever for the whole Middle East, in which the United States role has been, I would say, rather lamentable.

One last current issue, just a word, anti-Americanism in Europe. Yes, it exists. I don't think it's going to last if you have a decent president. What I am struck by, and what has struck a number of Americans coming to France, expecting fully to be attacked on the street, denounced as murderers and so on, they have found that people have been extraordinarily friendly. It's that the French, having had so many regimes and governments, as you know, make a very clear difference between a people and its government. France, of course, has beaten the record for governments. So there is no profound anti-Americanism, there is a political anti-

Americanism, aimed at the last eight years, and with some exasperation about previous ones. But it doesn't go that deep; in that sense it's not irretrievably lost. And I don't think it will take a generation to change, if there is a different sort of administration. One of the men in charge of French foreign policy in the days of Mitterrand, Hubert Védrine, was known for being extraordinarily critical of America, sparring a lot with Madeleine Albright. They exasperated each other, but became very good friends in the game. He said that the American leader whom he respected the most was Clinton, because Clinton was well informed, which was not the case with Bush, and modest and very easy to deal with. So I think any president, which isn't somebody who gives orders, and who treats the Europeans as inferiors, will regain popularity, I think, very easily. So that's not to me a major problem.

The second kinds of issues are what I would call "world order" issues. Especially if there is a recession, the United States has to give much more priority to its domestic problems, which I think will be necessary. The United States is finally going to face the problem of being one among a number of major poles, and they are not ready for that. It's not been part of the national vocabulary, and I think it'll be an extremely difficult adjustment. And what is left of the neocons—and they're still there, nobody's talking about exiling them—they will still be there and, in fact, you know, [they will say:] "We spend all our money on the poor, the real problem is our role, our place in the world, and why should we recognize that others may be equally important powers?" This is going to be a very big issue in American foreign policy.

There are the other issues, the ones that Samantha Power and others like to emphasize, the protection of human rights, the problems of energy independence, and so on. There is, I think, going to be a great deal of domestic resistance to any sort of outside adventures. I don't think that the attitude, which prevailed in the '90s, which saw the promotion of human rights and perhaps even of democracy,

which I always thought was a bridge too far. I think this is not likely to be a very important issue. It's not something, actually, that McCain has ever talked about. That's not his universe.

The other thing which is missing, and I think it may remain missing in American foreign policy, is sufficient attention to problems of development and of what I wouldn't call (I don't like the expression) nation-building. What I have in mind is state-building, helping countries which are failed states, or non-states, build elementary important institutions. And this is not something which has much preoccupied Americans in recent years, with the exception of a few people, like Jeffrey Sachs, for instance. I think if the United States engages fully on some of those world power issues there will be domestic resistances.

The last thing, I think, the last set of issues, are two problems of new architecture, which are very important if one thinks about the future relationship between the U.S. and Europe. One is what to do about NATO. I always thought that ultimately it would be a good idea to replace NATO, which is entirely seen by the Americans as their property, with some pressures on the allies so that they do what the United States wanted them to do, by a sort of bi-party organization with the United States and Canada on the one hand, which is one way of diluting the American component. Canada is a remarkably wise country. And on the other hand, the EU, which it might even help the EU to develop a common policy. But this would be much better than the present situation in which you are dealing with the U.S., which has to drag the Europeans along, and that only creates, I think, rather bad blood. So I think its time for a different architecture.

Another problem of architecture, I just want to mention it, is the popularity in some circles in America, including often neocons—and unfortunately also Mrs. Albright, but one has to remember that she's Czech originally. No, I mean it explains a lot. Her father was exiled first by the Nazis then by the Communists;

she is really quite a remarkable woman, but she doesn't like the Russians. It's the least one can say. So there is this notion that since the U.N. is unusable because of the veto of the Russians and the veto of the Chinese, then there should be a sort of alliance of democracies, which would allow the West to do all the kinds of the things which cannot be done through the U.N. I think it has been mentioned before, I think it's a very dangerous path. How does one select these democracies? Well, America's definition of a democracy is, "free elections." That doesn't get you very far. It requires much more than free elections, it requires structures, it requires habits, and it requires everything that, indeed, Tocqueville studied in the second volume of *Democracy in America*. So, I don't think it's a very good idea.

I think what is much more useful, or would be useful, only because it's easy, is giving written importance to the U.N. and using the U.N. to put pressure on the states like China and Russia as long as they behave. Obviously my view of what happened in Georgia is a little bit more complicated than Mr. McCain's view. I don't think that the Georgians or the Georgian government was entirely innocent in this business. I don't know how much they were encouraged by the U.S., but it's not the first time that the U.S. gives verbal encouragement and then when the other guy acts accordingly suddenly the U.S. isn't there. We saw this in Hungary in 1956. But it seems to me that dealing seriously with the U.N. and trying to turn it into an effective organization, which is something which incidentally Dominique de Villepin, back in the days when he was foreign minister and prime minister had a great deal of interest in. But the only problem was he wanted to do this with Kofi Annan and the time was wrong; it was the end of Kofi Annan's mandate. This would be much more useful in the long run than an alliance of democracies, which would inevitably be once again dictated by the United States, and which would create all kinds of tensions among countries wanting to be in it, and "why not me?" and so on and so forth. We don't need this.

Well, these are just a few points and everything will indeed, much will, depend on the result of the elections. I can't make any prediction. Each time in my life I've made a political prediction I've been on the wrong side. So since I don't want to be on the wrong side in this one, I shall carefully avoid making any prediction. The only thing I will say, simply on the basis of the last eight to nine months, is that Obama is an extremely impressive man, who has waged an extraordinary campaign with the help of amateurs who have managed to register millions of people. One of my former students who, having just graduated from Harvard, was given responsibility for several states in the campaign, has turned out to be more efficient than many of the PR people who are usually used as campaign managers. So there is something very attractive. What we don't know is what latent racism may do, what the torrent of lies which has come out of Mr. Rove's factory will do. Now, unfortunately Obama has gotten so much money that he can round out some of those advertisements, but the next two weeks will be interesting. I hope that Marco and his other colleagues here will organize another such meeting after one year of Obama when we will be able to see how things went and it will undoubtedly be quite different from what we've talked about today.

Question and Answer Session

(Kenneth H. Keller, Moderator)

Professor Nuti made the interesting comment that Italy, as the sort of fourth nation in the European community, found it valuable to see an alliance with the United States and to be somewhat closer. And of course that reminds us that, in addition to those four, there are 23 other countries. What one wonders is, if we do ever get a treaty that the European Union was willing to agree to, what would be the influence of those other countries, which I think you would probably describe in different terms from the way we've described the three main players or the four main players that we've talked about here? (Kenneth H. Keller)

Well on that one note, it seems that once one is dealing with a group of 27 nations plus a few more, even if one keeps Georgia and Ukraine waiting a little longer. I must say, the idea of exporting NATO at this point to Ukraine and Georgia is such a poke in the eye of the Russians, it's just absurd. I mean, what would we say if the Warsaw Pact still exists and was, all of a sudden, offered to Canada and to Mexico? I mean, it is perfect ridiculous. Anyway, but it seems to me that it will mean a very different sort of structure. It will mean a sort of Directoire apart from the Commission which I think is a highly efficient body and has done a remarkable task. We see many of them coming; we have a lady who's been at the EU almost since the beginning. She then became an associate of Delors and when she retired she was essentially sent to the United States to represent the EU to American universities, and so she has brought an endless stream of members of the Commission, who have been really quite remarkable. But apart from the Commission, I think one will need not just the Council of 27 members. There will have to be a sort of, I don't know how to call it, but as long as someone doesn't call it a Directoire, it will be all right. But a group that is selected by the 27 and

can act as the Directoire of the states, since the states will undoubtedly continue to be important actors. But I don't think that a structure of 27 and an administrative commission is very feasible.

They couldn't do it, but it seems to me that the attitudes towards the United States are quite different in those other countries, just as the attitude in Italy is different from the other three. (Kenneth H. Keller)

No, I think this is probably inevitable. These are not countries that are going to abandon their distinctiveness very quickly. I think somebody had reminded me of something I had written, which I usually tend to forget, but it seems in 1964 I wrote something about how the more Europeans integrate the more each one clings to its identity, and I think this will continue. You can't expect this to disappear very quickly and you shouldn't rub it in.

I was struck listening to your talk and I enjoyed it very much, but it seemed to me there was an implication in your talk that the United States has choices, has enormous choices. Now I'll explain this point better, because it seems to me that the United States is not as able as maybe it always was to abstain from intervention as a result of many of the foreign policy changes or choices that it's actually made in recent times. And I was thinking in particular that in the case of Iraq, which you talking about as being something which the United States should disengage from very, very quickly. Now, I don't think it's a completely gloomy scenario, just looking at the history of this. Being British I've got some scope. Gloomy scenario: the United States very quickly leaves from Iraq, which seems to be the preferred policy of Obama and indeed it seems to be almost inevitable at the moment. Well, OK, Iraq collapses. Kurdistan maybe declares independence, which leads to implications with Turkey and Iran. Syria maybe gets involved in the conflict; Israel inevitably becomes involved in the conflict, which involves Syria, Turkey, and Iran. The United States stays out of that, how can it? And if

it gets involved again, will its choices be ones that the Europeans will approve? I don't think so. And what I'm trying to get at is, I wonder whether the effect of overextension and, thinking very much like Paul Kennedy here, the effect of overextension will lead to the inability to make choices, which almost in a sense accelerates the possibility of the strategic decline of the country which has made the wrong choices. (Professor Mark Gilbert)

Well, this is a very, very good question. It seems to me, however, if one takes into account something, which we did discuss today, which is the state of public opinion, it is going to be extremely difficult to persuade the Americans to re-intervene there. Just as it was impossible after 1919, when essentially the United States, especially after the death of Wilson, just left business of America as "business." This being said, the problem of Obama is not one of immediate disengagement and it leaves some room to maneuver. What is very clear is he does not want to be left at the mercy of generals, whose tendency to believe that the presence of their forces is indispensable wherever they are, can easily become rather overwhelming. And to whom McCain, who I think is suffering from the fact the he is personally not a military man, is much more inclined to listen. But the fact is that Obama has kept saying, "We will take the realities on the ground into account." I don't quite see the Syrians, who seem to be on the verge of some kind of complicated rapprochement with the West, not just the United States, getting very much involved in this. The possibility of a split of the country is there, whatever happens, if the Iraqi parliament is not capable of settling the myriad of disputes between different factions and different areas. I think there will be revulsion in the United States against continuing in this war if there continues to be warfare, and that's one of the prices that has to be paid for what was a totally unnecessary war.

It's not that Saddam Hussein was an ideal regime, God knows, but the U.S. very simply did not realize what it was putting its feet in. If they had known, giving importance to a con-man like Mr. Ahmed Chalabi, it would have been incompre-

hensible. The more one reads about it—I'm going to teach a course this spring on the war in Iraq with a colleague of mine who is a very distinguished priest who teaches at the Kennedy School—it is unbelievable. I mean it is absolutely unbelievable that a country like the United States would get into this sort of adventure in the conditions in which it did. The literature by now is enormous and irrefutable; they did not know what they were doing. And it was always a belief, which is so profoundly written in the American ethos, that "There is nothing we cannot do." In the '60s, when de Gaulle, was synonymous with troublemaker for the United States on issues which were less dangerous than Iraq, the Kennedy administration was persuaded—something we talked about this morning—that its pushing England into entering the EU is something that the world could not say "no" to. The only person who did (Jean Monnet told the Americans that de Gaulle could not say "no"), the only person who said "no" was an American general who was a paratrooper general, who happened to be ambassador to France, who had become very friendly with de Gaulle, and who of course was discounted in Washington because of that friendship. He said, "Wait a minute, he's not going to let them in." And McGeorge Bundy wrote a memo, which has come out, which was a prose poem saying essentially, "Whatever the United States wants, it can do." And this is still being read, and this was exactly the mood in 2003. I was teaching my course on ethics and IR to Harvard students who were gung-ho about what a great war this was going to be, about how easy it was going to be. And, God, that is, I think, something, which will not happen again very quickly. This faith in what we can do, I think, is one of the weaknesses of McCain, actually. Instead of being precise on anything, it's always, "we are the best on earth we can do anything we want," and so on, but that I think it isn't going to work. I hope.

I'm curious if there's any concern, let's say if the United States does withdraw from the international scene, for whatever reason, and if the United States chooses to, as you said, step back from its role as the hegemon and try to be more

internationalist. Is there any concern in Europe that if the United States withdraws and there is a sort of power vacuum, if maybe another state like China will step into that power vacuum? Is there any concern in the sense that, "be careful what you wish for." That you might get it when the United States power is reduced, you might get an even more unsavory actor like communist China that steps in with its human rights issues. (Michael Manetta, United States)

The Chinese are a remarkably skillful and prudent people. I don't think—and by the way they have engaged much of their money in the West—I don't see this as much of a risk. This is no longer the Cold War in which indeed every single American retreat was seen as a potential Soviet gain. And I don't think it will be, given the continuing presence and power of the United States anything like a return to isolationism. That strikes me as unlikely. But there are other instruments of influence than having a military budget the size of the United States and hundreds and hundreds of bases everywhere and putting anti-missile defenses against Iran and countries which, well, it doesn't make any sense and so on. So I think there is a large margin to maneuver. But I think the people who will be most affected by a sort of reduction of weight will be the Americans. Not the average American, but the establishment, which is quite formidable and which has gotten used to "we are the best, we are the brightest." This is what worries me a little bit. Because even when it doesn't take the neocon form, which is pretty awful, the speeches of Madeleine Albright about the indispensable role of America is in the world, encouraged a sort of hubris. But I'm not terribly worried about the Chinese suddenly invading America except for shopping purposes, which many Europeans have already done given the rate of the euro to the dollar. So I'm not terribly worried about this, they are not going to return to [being] isolationists. I was going to say, the military wouldn't allow it. They are still quite powerful. But they do have to choose priorities at this point, in part because of this—you know one of the things that strikes me having lived in this country now for fifty-three, fifty-four years is something which Americans still find difficult to realize; it's

that if there is a country in which there are huge class differences, it is the U.S. They don't want to know that. And in the campaign both candidates talk about the middle class, when they mean the poor. You can't talk about the poor. It's not kosher, so to speak. So "middle class" has become a code word for everybody who is not a millionaire. It's the 95 percent to whom Obama is promising a tax cut with only 5 percent having a tax raise. And that is something I think any new administration will have to face, and one of my worries is that McCain is totally unprepared for that. And it's not Ms. Palin coming from a frozen area with 300,000 inhabitants: she's not going to be of much help.

This is what worries me. That there's a sort of unwillingness to face the fact of class; the segregation in housing is such that many people never meet somebody who is poor or if they meet him he is somebody who comes with a gun or with a knife and steals their pocketbook at night or something of that sort. But I've seen, one thing, in the last few weeks, television, which is sometimes useful, has shown pictures of these rows and rows of deserted houses where people couldn't pay their mortgages and had to get out. It is nightmarish to see. McCain made a vague proposal, which didn't make a very great deal of sense, about essentially reducing the mortgage, which was not exactly a solution. Obama hasn't talked about the issue of housing *at all*. This is really quite a surprise. Maybe because he is surrounded by very distinguished economists who don't travel into those parts of the country, but it is an extraordinary problem. And if the crisis does become a genuine recession, it's going to be even worse, so that many of these areas look now like New Orleans after Katrina. I think the great play of the 20th century was Ionesco's *Rhinoceros*. Suddenly rhinoceroses arrive, and people in the café ask themselves not what are they doing here, but is it an Asian rhinoceros or is it an African rhinoceros? And there is only one person, a perfectly ordinary guy, who doesn't turn into a rhinoceros because everybody else does. And sometimes American society seems to be in need of lots of productions of *Rhinoceros*. They are not aware of what goes on *dans les bas fonds*, in the inferior works of society. And that is bad.

My question is about the dirty little secret you mentioned in Obama's campaign about not wanting to admit publicly that they'll be forced to make large budgetary cuts in the defense budget. Now, to give you a little bit of background about my question, I drove nuclear submarines around the world for a few years, which is one of the most anachronistic platforms in the modern militaries of the world. And after that I served under General Petraeus in the headquarters in Baghdad. So I've worked and wondered about these issues for quite some time, and my big question after hearing that we'll have to make big defense cuts, is really, "So what?" And how do we sell it politically? What is the resistance? How do we get over those road-blocks, to getting rid of this, to transitioning into a post-supremacy era?
(Christopher Brownfield, United States)

Well, on the military one it seems to me that at a time when a number of former secretaries of defense and of state, including of all people Henry Kissinger, promote the abolition of nuclear weapons, maybe having another look at the nuclear weapons budget and that the need for new kinds of nuclear weapons might be the beginning of wisdom. Does the United States need a military budget, which, I repeat, is as large as the sum total of all military budgets in the world? I find it very, very hard to believe. I'm not asking full disarmament, but essentially the question is what should be the priority. We are at a moment in which, whatever Russian behavior has been towards Georgia, they are not a threat to Western Europe, at this point. They can do a little bit of blackmail with the oil—they are not the most subtle diplomats in the world, although they have a very clever foreign minister.

The Chinese aren't going to invade anyone except Taiwan, should Taiwan proclaim its independence, which the Americans have been most consistently, and rightly, hostile to. India isn't going to invade anybody, not even Pakistan. So it is not a bad moment for looking at cuts and having, perhaps, something which the interwar period was so famous for, with terrible results, which were the disarmament conferences. But I don't think it's a bad moment for this. Obviously I'm not

going to abolish the military budget, but it is extraordinary how little money is being spent on things like health care, and some of the plans for health care are, I mean, it's just unbelievable. The conditions of many of the hospitals are terrible, not to mention the schools. And this is supposedly the greatest place in the world. Forty-seven million people without health care, it's extraordinary. And there are, every day in the newspapers, horror stories from families who have suffered from this. So sooner or later the country has to, if it wants to have the power necessary to have influence in the world, give priority to its own condition. And one doesn't notice it because there are, of course, all the skyscrapers built for millionaires. It's monstrous. But otherwise, if you look at the poor areas, it's unbelievable what's going on. And since it is fairly nicely segregated from the rest, people are not that much aware of it. So I think it's high time that the United States looks at the situation. That's really all I can say about it. Somehow the money will have to be found for dealing with this. In a sense one could say that the American public has paid very dearly for America's grand role in the world and it's high time that it be equalized.

I have two questions. To what extent do you think that the U.S. pulling out of Iraq will affect its capacity to negotiate in the Arab-Israeli conflict? If it disengages, for instance, it might be perceived as weak. And the second question is, to what extent is American exceptionalism, in this form of the U.S. telling itself that "we are the best country in the world," particular to the U.S.? Because I think maybe every country has some sort of form of it. Certainly the Chinese, maybe, tell themselves that they are really the best or maybe the Russians, now that they are in great form and they say, "We're the best." So is this just a particularly American phenomenon? (Paul Bisca, Romania)

Well, I think the influence of the United States in the Arab world would increase enormously if the U.S. showed a serious interest in a solution to that particular problem. Because it's a very easy thing for Arabs, not just extremists but even

moderates, to point out what the conditions in Gaza are, what the conditions in the West Bank are. And the best document I could see for American-Arab relations is this last statement, speech, or article of Olmert, describing exactly what needs to be done. And he's not exactly a dove. So I think it would reinforce the position of the United States. The hope of the neoconservatives was that an American victory in Iraq would be only the beginning of a sort of seismic change in the Arab world, about which they knew very little, and that this would lead to moderation in the various Arab capitals. And this would mean that the Arabs would stop pestering the Israelis, which was one of the demands about these Palestinians, "Who are these people anyhow?" It's completely backfired. It has had exactly the opposite effect, and the notion that you can, and I'll mention this again, the rhinoceros. Ignoring that particular issue, even if it is not of cosmic importance from the point of view of eternity, after all there are only a few hundreds of thousands Palestinians. Nevertheless, symbolically, it is a very important issue. And I think that it's entirely in America's interest to try to resolve this. And also to try to lean sufficiently on the Israeli government, which will emerge from elections in November, to prevent them from attacking Iraq, and then Iran, about which they've become slightly hysterical, unilaterally. The Iranians are not that close to a nuclear bomb, and Ahmadinejad doesn't seem to be that solidly in power anyhow, there are different currents. My friend Shirley Williams, who was originally supposed to come here, was in Iran recently and found that it was a country whose population was quite deeply pro-American behind a regime. But they have a perfect right under international law to do what they have done, so it shouldn't be entirely impossible, if the United States changes its general attitude in this and other Middle Eastern problems, to have a positive role. It has not been tried really.

I just wanted to come back to the point you made right at the end about the new architecture and giving a greater importance to the U.N. I just wanted to ask you to elaborate on how you see that. Especially since you mentioned the pretty much deadlocked Security Council at the moment, with the Russian-Chinese

veto on one side and the U.S., and the sort of post-Kofi Annan era, in which we have perhaps not such an assertive secretary general at the U.N. So how in this day and age can we even begin to give greater importance to the U.N.?

(Astrid Haas, Austria)

Well it's interesting to see how useful the Chinese have been in a number of cases, including North Korea. I think they are, in that respect, very reluctant to get too deeply committed in other continents at this point, and there are other good negotiators. I think that it's always better to not immediately resort to votes in which they would probably use their veto or at least abstain, and negotiate behind the scenes and use it as a diplomatic instrument. I think the U.N. has been willfully neglected by the American administrations in recent years. I have my reservations about Clinton's foreign policy, but in the case of Kosovo they didn't handle it very badly at all because they realized that if they went to the Security Council there would be a Russian veto at the time, and they did what they did. Then when a resolution was presented at the Security Council condemning the intervention, that resolution failed. And a few months later, much to everybody's surprise, the Russians simply dropped Serbia like a hot potato. So there are ways in which one can deal with people without provoking them by vetoes and forcing them with their faculties of war. But the United States has not been—they are not as good diplomats as the British. Let's put it this way. I mean, the British have an extraordinarily impressive foreign service. The problem with the Americans is that all of the top positions are occupied by those whom my late colleague Richard Neustadt called the "in and outers." So that the foreign service people, even though some of them are remarkably able and intelligent people, know that they will never get much higher than this or that and the final steps are taken by people who, having come from universities, or from journalism, or from think tanks, are very eager for publicity. And that's not the best thing for a diplomat.

You said you believe that the U.S. or the West's policy with Iraq and Iran should just be, "completely get out of that region, let them stew in their own juices." I agree with what you said that the West really didn't know what we were getting into. My concern would be that if we were to evacuate in a year, two years time, and you mentioned the frail state of the institutions at the moment, would we have to be in a situation where we'd have to go back five years, six years, ten years down the line? (Iwan Davies, United Kingdom)

I don't think we would. I think part of the problem is we really invaded countries about which we know nothing, and this would be true in the case of the far reaches of Pakistan and Afghanistan even more. There are very few experts and they don't agree with one another. What I found so pitiful is the situation of the soldiers; 18-year olds, 19-year olds, not speaking the language and sent to places, which they really did not know anything about, with people with whom they could not communicate, surrounded, especially in the beginning, by enemies, bombs, traps, et cetera. I think that's totally irresponsible, completely irresponsible. So I don't think that they would ever be sent back. But I'm not saying things should be done from one day to the other; there have to be precautions. The idea of starting by evacuating some areas, and not everything, is probably a good one, but I'm still worried by how much the policies of General Petraeus will survive his departure from there.

Do you think there are analogies to be made with Vietnam? (Kenneth H. Keller)

Oh, are there ever. There's a wonderful movie, I don't know if it's been shown here, I think it's a Canadian movie. It's called *Away from Her*. It's a story, a very sad story about a woman who's getting Alzheimer's and is put in a rather plush clinic, and her husband is allowed to come and visit once a month. And the role is played by none other than Julie Christie, more beautiful than ever, a wonderful consolation for ladies in their '60s, if one can be as gorgeous as she is. There

is one scene, that I'm sure she inserted herself, where she is beginning to fall in love with another Alzheimer's patient, because she can see her husband only once a month, and he comes and they walk towards the dining room. There's a television on and the television is showing scenes from the war in Iraq and she stops and suddenly her memory comes back and she says, "Have they learned nothing, from Vietnam?" and marches on. It's absolutely extraordinary, because the movie is totally hypocritical otherwise, it's a private drama, but in this one sentence, if she could notice this, I'm hoping the Americans did. But you know, the memoirs of Dean Acheson were called in full modesty, *Present at the Creation*. Americans never think about the past, everything is about the future, and by the time they went into Iraq, Vietnam was quite forgotten, except by McCain. That's not a good thing because he still wants to avenge it; he still believes it could have been won.

Professor Hoffmann, thank you very, very much. (Kenneth H. Keller)

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