

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Presidential Candidates' Foreign Policy Advisers Panel Discussion

Washington, D.C.

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Moderator: Moisés Naím, Editor-in-Chief, *Foreign Policy*

Panelists: Denis McDonough, Obama for America; Mara Rudman, Hillary Clinton for President; and Richard Fontaine, John McCain for President

Marlene M. Johnson: Good morning, everybody. Welcome. I am so impressed. My goodness. When I said we needed to start at 8 o'clock promptly, you always hold your breath that people show up at the party, and here you are. We have an overflow room. This room seats 700. There is hardly a chair vacant, and next door, there are 400 people looking on audiovisual.

I'm Marlene Johnson, executive director of NAFSA, and we are so excited to have you here. We want to welcome you to this very special meeting this morning featuring the top foreign policy advisers of the three presidential candidates: Senators Hillary Clinton, John McCain and Barack Obama. This is a really special opportunity and is part of our 60th anniversary as well.

We have a stellar panel for you today moderated by one of Washington's most respected foreign policy thinkers.

We know that the next president will face a daunting task, and the issues around foreign policy challenges and the role of international education in that is an aspect of our concern and

our work that we really want to bring to the forefront of foreign policy discussions during the campaign.

So this is a great opportunity for all of us, and I want to thank you all for participating with us as well as for the foreign policy advisers of the campaign.

Now, I would like to ask Vic Johnson, our senior adviser on policy, to come and share a few words with you.

Victor C. Johnson: It will be very few words. I'm going to try to accomplish three tasks in about 30 seconds each so we can get started with the festivities.

First, to add my own welcome to all of you this morning for turning out at this important event which was conceived and organized by NAFSA's Public Policy Department. I want to acknowledge the leadership and hard work of Jill Welch and Ursula Oaks of the Public Policy staff in making this forum possible.

Secondly, it is not my role to introduce our guests from the campaigns but I do want to express NAFSA's gratitude to them for making themselves available this morning. We all think we are busy, and we are, but you do not know what busy is until you work on a presidential campaign. These people spend a lot of time on the road with the candidates, and it is really hard for them to be here with us this morning. I know a couple of them personally, and so, on my own behalf as well as NAFSA's, I would like to give them many thanks for being here.

Third, I have the privilege of all too briefly introducing the distinguished foreign affairs scholar who has graciously agreed to moderate our discussion this morning. Dr. Moisés Naím is editor-in-chief of *Foreign Policy*, the leading foreign affairs journal in the United States - I'll

assert that, Moisés, in confidence that no one is here to contradict me this morning - and, indeed, one of the leading such journals in the world.

Dr. Naím is an MIT Ph.D. for those of you who may be here from that institution. He has had a more distinguished career in two countries than most of us will have in one, having been Minister of Trade and Industry in his native Venezuela in addition to holding high-level positions in this city.

The most recent of the eight books that he has authored or edited is *Illicit: How Smugglers, Traffickers and Copycats Are Hijacking the Global Economy*. This book won the *Washington Post* award as one of the best nonfiction books in 2005, and I would commend it to any of you - having read it myself - who want to understand the international system better. So that is a free plug for you, Moisés.

So, with our thanks, I will turn it over to Dr. Moisés Naím.

Moisés Naím: Let me start by briefly introducing this interesting panel. Given where the campaign is, the fact that they made the time to be here is a test to your convening capacity and importance of this audience, and also their willingness to share their views and the views of the campaigns. So thank you very much again for having made the time.

Mara Rudman is an informal adviser to the Hillary Clinton campaign. She was a deputy national security adviser to President Clinton. She has worked in Congress. She specializes in political communications and foreign policy and strategies, and has a wide experience and multiple publications. I encourage you to look at her very interesting bio in your booklets.

Denis McDonough is an adviser to the Barack Obama campaign. He was a legislative director for Senator Ken Salazar of Colorado. He also worked with Tom Daschle. He combines his Hill and congressional activities with some more academic interests. He spent

some time in Germany. His central interests are, of course, Congress and U.S. foreign policy, but he has also regional interests in Europe, Latin America, energy, religion and public policy.

Richard Fontaine serves as a foreign policy adviser to Senator John McCain where he splits time between the Senate office of Senator McCain and the McCain 2008 campaign headquarters. He serves as a social director for Near Eastern Affairs of the National Security Council staff, and a policy analyst in [indiscernible] is Asian Affairs director. He has a particular interest in Asia, but of course, he has covered and studied a wide variety of foreign affairs and foreign policy issues.

So thank you all again.

One thing that is central to this audience and also central to the campaign is the standing of the United States in the world. There is great concern about what has happened in the last years. After 9/11, there was a surge of sympathy, solidarity for the United States.

We all remember it was epitomized by the headlines of the Paris newspaper, *Le Monde*. In September 12, the headline was, "We are now all Americans." It captured a sentiment that was widespread around the world. That is no longer the case. The standing, the respect, the affection for the United States has declined. That birth [sounds like] has immediate consequences for the competitiveness of the United States in areas like higher education, the ability of the United States to continue to be competitive and attract the best talent in terms of students, professors, research initiatives that are jointly undertaken by different centers.

Let's talk a little bit. I want to give you an opportunity. First, if you agree that it is true - you may not agree - that the United States' standing in the world has declined, but if you do agree, then what do you think needs to be done? What would be some of the concrete, tangible actions that could be undertaken to reverse that trend?

Let's start in the same order. Let's start with you, Mara, if you do not mind.

Mara Rudman: Sure. Well, I do agree, and I think it is unfortunate that the United States' standing in the world has declined. We had an opportunity, in a sense, through the terrible tragedy of 9/11 to turn that around given where world sentiment was and that it has been an opportunity in terms of where the world was with us that has not been seized by this administration.

I do an extensive amount of traveling around the world, though, and I also had seen that there is a tremendous reservoir out there of -- and I know in this audience as well, certainly far more than any of us on stage, you have a lot of back and forth with students around the world. And with your own traveling, I'm sure that you see, as well, that there are tremendous opportunities still out there for us to develop, as a country for us to restore and turn around what has been lost over the last several years.

I think that we do that, certainly, by encouraging the kind of work that you all do, but by also restoring the way that we talk to the rest of the world, the way that we deal with the rest of the world. We do it by having more opportunities to bring more people to this country, by having more opportunities to send people overseas, and by everything that goes with our day-to-day interaction, by our interaction at the government level, by our interaction at the individual level. It goes to all the things that you do everyday.

It also goes to how we coordinate our interactions. It goes to improving the ways that we bring people in here. It goes to how we both preserve our security but recognize that improving and protecting our national security also is everything from how we educate people and how we interact with people.

It is all levels of our security which starts with education, and it is the full spectrum of issues in terms of what we do and how we do it.

Senator Clinton, by the way, even before she was running for president, recognized that in things like the Education for All Act that she first introduced in 2004, dealt with primary and secondary education overseas, so not as directly in the areas that you all are involved in terms of university education, but putting priority in those areas as well.

Moisés Naím: Thank you. Denis?

Denis McDonough: Good morning, everyone. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be with you. Thank you especially to Vic and Marlene and Moisés for convening this group.

I also just want to say how honored I am to appear on the same stage with Richard and Mara, both of whom I consider dear friends and both of whom I consider great public servants of this country. I think I have worked closely with each of them notwithstanding the fact that our candidates have been involved in a very vigorous debate, and I have appreciated that opportunity.

I also think it speaks to a mildly different perspective than your question, Moisés, which is -- I remember very clearly where I was on 9/11. I was in the Senate Majority Leader's Office at the time working as national security adviser to the Senate Majority Leader. We thought a plane was coming to the Capitol. It was pandemonium and quite unsettling. About a month later, the largest bioterrorism attack ever in this country's history occurred in our office, still incidentally unresolved.

There was a period of time not only when the French thought we were all Americans, and the Venezuelans thought we were all Americans, but that, in fact, Americans thought we were all Americans.

For weeks after that attack, there was an amazing amount of activity and progress made legislatively. It had to do with a lot of these issues that you focused on, frankly. There was an openness to seeing our role in the world differently, a willingness to work together to put aside partisan differences. That did not last.

And one thing Senator Obama has made very clear is that it is time to get back to a situation here in Washington where it is not people coming from red states or blue states, but in fact, this is the capital of the United States of America, so that we are all working together on these challenges. That is why I think he has been so aggressively in favor of many of the things on your agenda. Because they do reflect what is best about this country, the things that unify us, and the things that strengthen us.

So that is why he has been a cosponsor of the Simon Act. That is why he has been aggressively pushing throughout this campaign in his policy proposals and fact sheets and speeches for more openness, for a greater investment and creation of a US\$2 billion global education fund so that we are helping to educate young people the world around rather than allowing madrasahs and other forms of extremism to educate people. Opening America's houses throughout the Muslim world so that we are telling our story directly in local language rather than having our story distorted and spun and told about us.

So at the end of the day, it is a challenge to get back to that spot, that the world was on September 11 and September 12, but it is also a challenge to get back to where Washington and the United States were on that day.

When we are able to do that, we will again be able to show the rest of the world exactly what it is that they so admired about the United States. In so doing, we are going to reap our own benefits and advance our own interest in that way, but again, it is not just bringing the world together, it is bringing this country back together again.

Moisés Naím: Thank you, Denis. Rich.

Richard Fontaine: Thank you, also, for having me here and it is wonderful to be here with my two colleagues. It is always fun to do these panels, particularly when there are two of the Democratic representatives here to talk amongst themselves. So hopefully, that will continue as long as possible.

That editorial comment --

Denis McDonough: Ask us in about 40 minutes if you like this.

Mara Rudman: If you still feel the same way.

Richard Fontaine: Well, that is true. When they gang up, that makes it a little bit more difficult. We were friends walking in.

Anyway, to get to your question which was about American standing in the world, I think this is something that anyone who looks at the trajectory of American foreign policies since September 11 has to be concerned about.

Senator McCain has said repeatedly that the war on terror is not going to be won through military means alone. We are not going to wage this battle through force of arms but through force of ideals. So things like scholarships in the end are likely to be more important than bullets. To convey to the world the kind of idealistic city on a hill that we all know the United States to be is a challenge but one that is absolutely important, and that is one of the reasons why Senator McCain has taken some of the positions that he has, for example, on the

issue of torture in Guantanamo Bay. In 2005, he led the effort to ban cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of U.S. detainees. He has said that if he is elected president, he would close Guantanamo Bay.

He has also taken a rather forward position on climate change, an issue that is of great importance to people around the world, and as it should be, and one that where frankly the United States is not seen as doing everything it needs to be doing.

Those are the sorts of things that it is important in Senator McCain's mind to make sure that we get right when we are trying to convey the kind of image that we know the United States to be.

Then, it comes to how we actually convey that image. Educational exchanges and those sorts of things are vitally important. Another is our public diplomacy and the way that we engage in that. Senator McCain said that if he is elected president, he would reconstitute the U.S. Information Agency which was abolished and was folded into the State Department. Senator McCain thinks that was a mistake.

It also comes down to more practical sorts of things. When we are trying to show and have the reality that the United States is an open place, a welcoming place to people from all over the world to come here to study, to work, to invest, and that we, Americans, want to have the same advantages in educating our own people for the new globalized economy, sometimes, it just gets down to brass tacks.

For example, the number of H1B visas, we believe, in the United States should be raised so that more people can come to the United States to work and to make it more attractive for people from foreign countries to get advanced degrees here. We think it is important to let people who are coming for advanced degrees in the United States to be able to work while they

are getting their advanced degrees. Make it easier for those folks in these skill sets to be able to get green cards so that they can stay here.

Senator McCain has said that it should be a requirement of individuals who are going to our certain military service academies to study abroad because we bemoan year after year the lack of regional expertise in strategic areas, how few of our people in national security affairs know Pashto or Farsi or Arabic or have this intimate acquaintance with parts of the world that we find strategically important. That is a big element, and one of the ways that you can get at that is by having folks who are going to the Naval Academy or going to West Point to study abroad. Also, to build ties with governments and learn something about places that are not what we call strategic areas, so places in Europe and that kind of thing.

Then, we have really clamped down and made it hard since September 11, and often for very good reasons, on visas and background checks, and that combined with, I think, the image that America is not quite as welcoming to foreign students has meant that a lot of people are sending their children to college to Europe, to Australia, to Canada, where before, they would have sent them to the United States.

So we think we need to reopen the United States in a way to show that it is welcoming, to expedite background checks at the FBI, if that is what needs to be done - the visa processing and all of those sorts of things.

Moisés Naím: Let me follow-up on that because all of those principles eventually are converted into policy through bureaucracies in organizations. There is a big tension between the principle of retaining and expanding the United States' competitiveness by attracting and lowering the hassles and the obstacles for foreigners to come here to study, research, teach, and so on and the requirements. There is a tension between that goal and national security. So

those principles eventually clash with the functioning of the Department of Homeland Security and all the background checks and all of the difficulties of getting visas and screenings and quotas and all of the bureaucratic machinery that are associated with that.

So how one goes beyond principles? Just accept the principle and recognize it, and I assume that the three of you recognize that as a very important goal. But how do you convert that goal into practical operational realities that deal with the major difficulties that universities have in attracting and getting over the hurdles created by the Department of Homeland Security and other agencies? Do you have any ideas, suggestion, or proposals?

Richard Fontaine: I was speaking to some of our folks who work on the particular issue of what happens once you are in the pipeline to apply for visa to come to the United States especially if you are coming for education. You start to hear these nightmare stories of people who get on the list and they wait two years for a background check.

I think a lot of it is a problem just of capacity, not that we should not be doing background checks to ensure that people are not getting into the United States, who should not be getting into the United States, but my understanding is that you can literally count the number of people at the FBI who are doing these background checks on one or two hands, and the way that they are doing is antiquated system, sometimes dealing with hard copies of lists of people, so it is a capacity problem.

Moisés Naím: So the answer is the resources.

Richard Fontaine: And resources problem to some degree.

Moisés Naím: But others would argue that the lack of resource is a manifestation of an attitude that there is a fundamental posture of not giving too much importance or enough importance to this.

Denis McDonough: I think Richard is right that it is a resources question, but I think you are right, too, that we have to get back to a position where we actually mean what we say. So President Bush says a lot of the right things about trying to move this process so that we are open - America is back - but we see a system whereby there is no clear or transparent adjudication process for State and DHS to resolve their differences.

I know that you all would prefer to see or propose a council within the White House which would try to bang heads at the agencies to make this happen. I frankly do not think that you need to go that far. I think we have to get back to a system of some increased transparency, some active involvement, oversight from the Hill, and some way for State and DHS to adjudicate their differences that is not just pushing aside and coming back at some undetermined date any differences that they have.

So I think we have to dedicate the resources which should be reflective of us believing what we say. I think we also have to make these institutions work better and resolve the differences that they come to. Invariably, they are going to, and we have that across agencies throughout the government who are able to make it function in other ways. If it becomes a priority for administration, you can make it work.

Mara Rudman: I would echo Denis' point on that and add to it. I think that the way you set it up is actually not entirely accurate and that I do not think it is [audio glitch] and competitiveness goals. I think it is important that we look at the value of bringing international students here as part and parcel of our national security goals and objectives, frankly, because it enhances. It does not detract from our national security objectives to have better and stronger international education for this country. It can only help.

So we need to figure out how to do it better while at the same time making sure that our visa process runs more effectively and efficiently than it is done. Therefore, it is the national security objective of our country, and our National Security Council should be doing its job more effectively than it has been doing in the last eight years.

I agree with Denis, and I do not think it is necessarily -- I understand what your goals are in looking for a new White House position to get the job done. I think it is a natural inclination to say that what you need to do to make it a priority for the White House is to put another person in the White House to get the job done. I think that becomes even more of an inclination when you have a White House that has not been doing its job on these issues for such a long period of time. But, in fact, if you had a process that was running the way it ought to be running which is a National Security Council or a Homeland Security Council that is sitting on the agencies to expend the resources as they ought to be expended, or to make sure that increased resources are being expended appropriately, that where there are clashes between agencies, where words are spoken but deeds are not being done, it is the job of the National Security Council.

I know this from having been chief of staff in that National Security Council to sit on those agencies, to call people in for meetings. When the president has said he wants something done, you sit on the agencies and you make sure that difficulties are worked out until those things are done when it is the national security objective of your country.

This is a prime issue where it is in all of our interest to make sure it gets done. I think that you would see in a Democratic administration that these things are attended to because it is absolutely in the objectives of our country that we get these things done.

Denis McDonough: Hear, hear.

Moisés Naím: So let's talk about resources, and resources for study abroad, for example. You all know that there is the Simon Study Abroad Foundation that has been proposed, and so I want to give you an opportunity to state what is your candidate's position on that. Some have been clearer and more explicit, others less, but would you support that? Would your candidates support that? Use that opportunity to also talk about increased funding for study abroad programs, and you have already mentioned it, but I want to give you another opportunity to stress it.

Denis McDonough: I'm happy to go first. Moisés, I think, as you may know, Barack is a cosponsor of the Simon Act. He is obviously a very great admirer of Senator Simon who, obviously, we all admire a great deal.

I think our challenge is to make sure we are not overly focused on one piece of legislation and we are defining this issue as Mara just did, which is, this is a national security priority of the country.

Mara and I were chatting a little bit on the way over. I think that if you have a series of policymakers and voters who have had a chance to spend more time overseas, you might not go all in on Ahmed Chalabi as the person who is going to help you design your strategy for Iraq.

So I think that the challenge for us is to, obviously, recognize that the Simon Act is one principle vehicle here, but I think we have to look for -- it is a multivariable equation. We have to look for different levers to pull, and I think that is why Barack has outlined his strategy for this global education fund that will pull international resources to make education a priority.

I still remember flying to Pakistan in early 2002 when President Musharraf at the time gave a tremendous speech about - which we had been urging him to give - investing in secular education and trying to weed out the reliance on madrasahs. I can guarantee you that the

situation, as excited as we were to hear that speech, the situation from 2002 to today has only gotten worse. It is a question of dedication of our partners, but it is also a question of our dedication of resources. So that is one.

That is also why Senator Obama has pledged over the course of his first term to double U.S. foreign assistance, and some of that money would be dedicated to these programs, but not only these programs.

The challenge, always, when you bring such a high powered and influential group like yourselves to town, is to make sure that you have one particular thing you can really pigeonhole members and the administration on to make sure it gets done, but I think our shared national challenge has to be to see this as a national security priority and, as such, it cannot just be one piece of legislation but rather a whole change of the administration attitude that is going to require us to have some success.

Moisés Naím: Go ahead, Richard, and then we will go to Mara.

Richard Fontaine: When it comes to the question of resources and increasing or decreasing government programs, Senator McCain has said that if he is elected, he wants to do a top to bottom review of all U.S. government programs, and at the end of that audit period, some would go up and some would go down. So I cannot tell you the outcome of that now, but I would reiterate the kind of priority that Senator McCain has already articulated when it comes to things like international exchanges and having students at our service academies and other places to study abroad.

We have talked about this in the context of national security, and it is absolutely critical for our national security that we have a better understanding of the world that we have an open country where individuals who are going to be leaders in their countries can have a better

understanding of the United States, but it is also critical in a national economic sense, and we have not talked quite as much about that.

If you read Tom Friedman or whoever else, there is always the lament that students are not studying science and math, and we need more engineers and all these things, which is of course true. We need people to study math and science, but we also need them just for our own economic reasons to understand more of the world. Globalization is moving in one direction, and that is toward greater integration of our economies, toward greater movement of people and investment and goods and everything else.

We have to ensure that the United States is looking outward and understands the nature of this new world, and that gets precisely to those sorts of things that the folks in this room deal with, I think, all the time, which is bringing foreigners here to be educated and bring the Americans abroad to be educated.

So I think we need to look at this. I think Senator McCain looks at this absolutely as a national security issue but also as an issue of national competitiveness in the economic sense.

Moisés Naím: Thank you.

Mara Rudman: Thanks. I appreciate that point and understanding that this piece of legislation is important, too, and I think study abroad is a critical component. Senator Clinton will look at this piece of legislation, the Simon Study Abroad Act, very carefully in terms of her support for it, but it is a broader issue as well. The importance of Americans studying abroad, learning about cultures abroad, having that critical knowledge of other countries, other issues, it brings up the point that Denis was talking about earlier. I appreciate hearing what Rich has to say about the importance for our national security interests of understanding cultures and regions abroad because it really is perplexing to me.

Denis and I were talking about it walking over that if Senator McCain has that appreciation of the importance for our country of these kinds of issues, how and where and why that was not applied in terms of the approach to Iraq is pretty stunning. And Ahmed Chalabi is a great example of that. That anyone with any understanding of what was going on in Iraq would understand that he was not the man who is going to be leading a liberation movement there.

It would not have taken very much understanding and appreciation of what was going on in that country. To be able to get to that kind of depth of understanding is one small example of the benefits of some degree of appreciation, understanding, cultural exchange - call it just a deeper sense of the benefits of some back and forth between countries, the benefits of education, the benefits of deeper study and research that can come about from the work that you guys all do and promote from the benefits of the United States spending more time learning about other countries, sending our folks to other places and bringing other people here.

So I appreciate hearing the language that we are hearing on this stage today. I would like to have heard more of it in the past from the Bush administration and, frankly, from Senator McCain over the last few years, and I would hope that we would see it translated into some actions going forward.

Richard Fontaine: I should have walked over with you, guys.

Denis McDonough: You should have just listened to us about seven years ago.

Richard Fontaine: Can I respond for a minute to that?

Moisés Naím: Briefly.

Richard Fontaine: I guess I have the right of response here. Senator McCain is not running on Senator Obama or President Bush or Senator Clinton's platforms but rather on his

own. If you look back at who had the better understanding of the way things were going in Iraq, Don Rumsfeld or Senator McCain, I think the answer to that is clear.

Senator McCain, starting in August of 2003, was the first person to come out and say that the way we are fighting this war was not right, that it was not going to succeed, that we needed more troops and a different strategy. It took until the beginning of last year before the kinds of things that he had advocated for long were tested. And it is one of those rare opportunities where you get to test in real time whether or not that strategy works, and in fact, violence has come down by over 95 percent in most parts of Iraq, and it was reported this week by the military that violence is down to the levels that it was in March of 2004.

When it comes to international exchange and going abroad to understand what is happening in foreign countries, Senator McCain has been to Iraq eight times and has continued to go so that he can get a first-hand understanding of what is happening in those countries. In fact, he traveled with Senator Clinton to Iraq, and has invited this week, Senator Obama to go to Iraq as well.

So I do not think that Senator McCain suffers from a lack of understanding about what is going on in Iraq. In fact, I would argue that he is probably one if not the most informed policymaker on that question.

Moisés Naím: Thank you. Let me open the floor to your questions. If you have comments, questions you would like to post. There are several microphones around so feel free. Just please be brief and let us know who you are and who you are affiliated with.

Go ahead.

Judith Ortiz: Thank you. My name is Judith Ortiz. I'm with The Center for Cross-Cultural Study. I have been very impressed by your comments on the value of personal

experience at a variety of levels with cultures and countries, not our own, the knowledge that it brings which will inform decision-making. But it seems that there is one country where this is not obtained which is Cuba.

Immediately following this forum, there is a session on the topic of, “The Future of Study Abroad in Cuba: Where Do We Go from Here?” What are your comments on that topic?

Moisés Naím: I will ask you to ask the question to a specific member of the panel because there are several questions. Is there a specific member of the panel that you would like to answer the question?

Judith Ortiz: Yes. I think I would like Mr. McDonough to answer.

Denis McDonough: Great. You may have seen just last Friday in Miami, Senator Obama outlined a new set of policy goals as it relates to Cuba. He would immediately lift all limitations on family travel to the island and on cash remittances to the island. He would retain the embargo as leverage for negotiations with the Cuban government to further normalize or to try to normalize relations.

As it relates to the future of study abroad, I think that Barack would say, and has said, that ultimately the exchange of students from here to Cuba would be in our interest and, certainly, will be in the interest of the Cuban people, and that will be one of the issues that will be on the table for these negotiations.

Moisés Naím: Thank you.

John McAuliffe: John McAuliffe from the Fund for Reconciliation and Development. I’m afraid, Mr. McDonough, I’m going to go in a little more concretely on that.

Denis McDonough: Do not be afraid.

John McAuliffe: I have to say I'm a total Obama partisan. I have been a volunteer in campaigns.

Denis McDonough: Now, definitely, do not be afraid.

Richard Fontaine: McCain volunteer next, please.

John McAuliffe: In 2003-2004, about 10,000 American students were going every year to Cuba on exchange programs. President Bush effectively ended that as a payoff to his supporters in Miami. That was the same time that Bush made family travel so hard.

Denis McDonough: Correct.

John McAuliffe: It frankly does not make any sense why Obama will talk about family travel and talk about negotiations, and those are both very commendable positions, but not talk about what he could do on January 21st which is to restore the non-tourist purposeful travel that would allow student programs to again start and return quickly to the level. What has changed? Why should we not go back to 2003-2004 in the policy of Bill Clinton?

Moisés Naím: Thank you.

Denis McDonough: I think, John, it is a fair question, and I think that the question for a U.S. policymaker is, "What are the levers that we can use to advance our goals?" As I said, this will be one of the issues that Barack will be happy to take a hard look at in the context of negotiations and in the context of his review of our policy. But at the moment, we are just not ready to go there.

Moisés Naím: Thank you. Over there, please.

Linda Gentile: Hello. I'm Linda Gentile. I work at Carnegie Mellon University, and I have a question for Mr. Fontaine - if I have your name correctly.

I know that Senator McCain has been supportive of comprehensive immigration reform, and you have touched upon it this morning, the need to bring the best and brightest minds to the United States while at the same time balancing our national security and to secure borders. I'm interested in what Senator McCain would do with regard to the agencies, for example, Department of Homeland Security agencies that are engaged in policies that are sometimes having unintended consequences, shackling innocent visitors at the ports of entry, lengthy detainees.

So how would Senator McCain balance the needs and ensure that the agencies are not only securing the borders [audio glitch]?

Richard Fontaine: That is a good question. One imperative that Senator McCain has said throughout this debate over comprehensive immigration reform is that when we are looking for policy solutions to the problem of illegal immigration, we need to do this in a humane fashion.

I think that principle will inform all aspects including the kind of stuff that you are getting at. I also think that where you are getting at will change or not change depending on the presidential leadership, the vision that the next president - whoever it may be - would articulate on all of these sorts of questions. So if we do have a comprehensive solution to the problem of illegal immigration, and when it gets to the way in which people are detained and everything else, there will be a top-down vision for the principles, and there will just need to be people to knock the heads of the agencies together to ensure that they are, in fact, carrying out the vision that is laid out by the president.

Moisés Naím: Thank you. Go ahead.

Steven Ferst: I also have a question for Senator Obama's campaign. I'm sorry. I forgot to introduce myself, Steven Ferst from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Senator Obama has said that he [audio glitch] directly to the people through requiring national security officers to have broadband town hall meetings. My question is: What will Senator Obama do to ensure that more Americans are actually educated about the world and the need for better global engagement? In particular, because you mentioned the Simon Act, how can Senator Obama work to ensure that is actually passed and funded?

Moisés Naím: Thank you.

Denis McDonough: Good questions. He has outlined an aggressive education agenda and he talks about this every single day. That part of his education agenda will be, obviously, to increase investment in science and math education but also in foreign languages and art because he believes, I think, as Richard was saying, we have to find a way to make sure that our kids are going to be able to compete in a globalized economy.

As it relates to the Simon Act, I think the great thing about being president is you get an opportunity to move these proposal through your budget and through your policy proposals, and this will certainly be on that list of issues if he is in the White House come January.

Moisés Naím: Sir?

Marc Davidson: Good morning. My name is Marc Davidson. I'm the education abroad coordinator of Benedictine University in Lisle, Illinois. Some of the concerns that my students have coming into my office is that they cannot afford tuition for U.S. institutions as it is, let alone the extra cost it would take for study abroad.

My question is: What would Senator McCain have planned to help lower the cost of U.S. institutions so that students can afford to study abroad for the experiences?

Richard Fontaine: That is a good question. I'm sure there is a great answer to it. You have the foreign policy guy up here unfortunately, so I'm just not that familiar with the elements of his education policy to be able to answer your question other than to talk about some of the things that I mentioned before when it comes to people at service academies and the idea of his top to bottom review of government programs which would naturally include federal programs related to study abroad. So those programs could shrink, could grow, depending on their merits.

Given the way that I have talked about it and the context of this and his priorities, then that would be the spirit in which I think that would be looked at. That is all I can really say on that topic.

Ellen Badger: Good morning. My name is Ellen Badger. I'm director of the Office of International Student and Scholar Services at Binghamton University in New York, and I'm also a member of the NAFSA's board of directors.

I'm going to say that this question could be answered by any of the three, so whomever wants to grab it. Here is my question. You have all spoken this morning about the importance of international educational exchange as essential to long-term U.S. national security and competitiveness. I believe that we need a national policy led by a president to make this happen. So my question is: If elected, would your candidate support the establishment of such an international education policy, and what would it include?

Moisés Naím: Who wants to volunteer?

Denis McDonough: I will. The short answer is yes. I guess want to say that this has to be a priority that is woven through all of our policies. In so far as you are saying, "Will there be the creation of an office and the creation of a specific international education policy," I

frankly do not know the answer to that, but can I tell you that as president, will international education be a fundamental policy goal that will be woven through U.S. national security policies more generally? The answer to that is yes.

Moisés Naím: We have eight people in line and five minutes to go. So that gives you a sense of how quickly we should go through this. Sir?

Emilio Inda: Good morning. My name is Emilio Inda. I'm the regional manager for the Americas at the University of Alberta in Canada. My question is open but it is two questions in one. One is actually, what is the role of Canada in higher education in your thoughts.

The other one is related to - what is the media and the Internet cover as well, all of those things going on the campaigns and also some of the predictions that many people are actually posting online. So this goes to -- at the end, Senator Obama will be the next president? What is the talk of that? Did you analyze that data and those sorts of things?

Moisés Naím: So it is a combination of Canada and who is going to win the election.

Mara Rudman: If Canada votes, apparently you have it.

Richard Fontaine: I thought we would win the Ottawa primary especially with our position on NAFTA.

Moisés Naím: Do you want to take that question?

Richard Fontaine: Sure. Let me talk just a minute about Canada a little bit more broadly and very briefly. I was joking about, to some degree, our position on NAFTA. This is a real contrast among the candidates, and Senator McCain is an ardent champion of free trade, and that includes NAFTA and things that when it comes to the kind of contributions that Canada is making at places like Afghanistan and our alliances and that kind of thing, that we

should be doing all we can to support our allies, and that includes moving forward on free trade rather than trying to reopen old agreements. I do not know if that makes you change your mind about your vote as a Canadian for president of the United States. I answered the Canadian portion of that question.

Moisés Naím: Please.

Jason Packman: Hello. My name is Jason Packman [phonetic]. I'm a second year student at the School of International Relations in Pacific Studies at UC, San Diego. I have a question to ask for Senator Clinton's representative.

We talked a little bit about the Department of Homeland Security but International Education Policy is also run out of Commerce, State, Education and Defense. So I'm wondering in terms of implementation if it would be better to reform policy on implementation into one or two agencies instead of all four. Thank you.

Mara Rudman: Thanks. That is a good question. There are a lot of questions about reform among the various agencies on a range of national security issues that folks are looking at, I would guess, frankly, across the campaigns including the role of the - I mentioned earlier - Homeland Security Council and whether and how redundant that has become. When the Department of Homeland Security was stood up, the Homeland Security Council was stood up first.

You mentioned a range of agencies. It applies not only to international education, frankly, but to any number of issues. One of the jobs, as I mentioned earlier, the National Security Council processes is to make sense among all these agencies. We can do a whole lot better than we have done. Some of that may be consolidating the number of agencies that are involved in these various programs, but a lot of it is also running our processes a lot better than

we have done. It is [audio skips] boring stuff to talk about it. It is incredibly important work to do, and to do a whole lot better than we have been doing it. That involves getting a new [audio skips] administration in. I happen to think it is critical to get a Democratic administration and to do this job better.

Moisés Naím: Thank you. [Audio skips] Unfortunately, we have to just take two more.

Linda Seatts: I'm Linda Seatts. I'm the director of the Office of International Students and Scholars at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan.

This is for Obama's adviser. We have talked a lot about the Department of Homeland Security, but I would like to know what Obama's strategy is for strengthening that, the Department of Homeland Security, and more interagency coordination as we talked about the resources available. I want to know what his thoughts and strategies are on strengthening the Department of Homeland Security.

Denis McDonough: In terms of strengthening the Department of Homeland Security, I think that Mara has laid out a very important predicate here, which is that the existing processes and infrastructure that we have has to work better. Throughout our government, there is interagency friction and challenges, and we have the National Security Council and various White House coordinators to try to make that work better.

So I do not know that I can get any more specific for you than I have, but I will also say this. When I talked at the beginning about how broken Washington is in terms of making policy, the Department of Homeland Security might be exhibit A on that list. So we do have to figure out a way to make sure that that is performing the mission at the level the country needs it to perform. It is a fundamentally important institution.

Moisés Naím: Last question.

Male Voice: Thank you. This question is for all three advisers.

Moisés Naím: No, I do not think so. Just pick one.

Yongsheng Sun: Okay. For Obama candidate's adviser. I'm Dr. Yongshen Sun from Columbia Basin College. Many people are talking about the peaceful rise of China and, indeed, that China has been a top, if not the top, foreign student provider to the U.S. What is your view and policy towards China?

Denis McDonough: Excellent question. I want to give a shout out to my Benedictine brother. I'm a graduate of St. John's University which is the Benedictine College of Minnesota from before.

In terms of the rise of China, the question is: How do we get back to a clear-eyed view of what our interests are in dealing forthrightly with China where we can and making very clear with China where we disagree?

I think that we have seen an example of this play out as it relates to our concern over the situation in Tibet. The fact of the matter is that we have to be willing to be very hardheaded and very clear-eyed about where we disagree, communicate those disagreements where we must, and I think that list is long and will include things like trade, and Tibet, and Taiwan, and the missile buildup in the Southeast. But the question, too, is being clear-eyed about where we can cooperate, and that list is also long.

We have to figure out how to make sure that we are dealing with this in a forthright manner so that things like climate change and low-carbon energy are areas where we can cooperate. This is, obviously, a longer question that deserves a longer answer, but that is my opening game.

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