

Alan Mendoza | The International Implications of the US Presidential Election

- Good morning, good evening, everybody. Before I hand over and introduce Alan Mendoza, I'd like to pay our respects to the late Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, who will be solely missed by all of us who knew him and, in fact, globally. I'd like to now introduce Alan. Alan, welcome. Alan is an old friend. I've known him for many, many years, since he was a young boy, actually, when the Henry Jackson was being orchestrated out of his bedroom, and that I think is almost 18 years ago. So Alan, it's a great, great pleasure for me to have you here on our Lockdown University. You certainly are part of our family.

Dr. Alan Mendoza is a co-founder and executive director of the Henry Jackson Society, Britain's leading ThinkTech fighting for the principles and alliances which keep societies free. He directs strategy for the organisation as well as acting as its main public face in mediums as diverse as the BBC, Sky, Fox News, CNBC, Al Jazeera, Bloomberg, and the British Print Media where he is a regular columnist for City A.M., London's business newspaper. Having obtained a BA honours and MPhil in history at Gonville & Caius College Cambridge, Alan completed a PhD at the same institution.

He is a fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and was the parliamentary candidate for the Conservative Party in the Brent Central constituency for the 2015 general election. He's also vice chairman of JNF UK and a trustee of the President Reagan Memorial Fund Trust. I'm now going to hand over to our Carly Maisel and to Alan, who will be talking about the international implications of the US presidential elections. Thank you, Carly, and thank you, Alan. Over to you.

- Thank you very much, Wendy. So, Alan, this is a real privilege for me as I can't claim to have known you when you were a boy starting Henry Jackson in your bedroom, but it's been over a decade, so-

- I have to agree, I was still young at the time, though.

- You were young. You're still young, Alan.

- [Alan] Thank you.

- So before we launch into examining Biden, I wanted to start off actually talking about President Trump. So, although he didn't start a formal war, and as you may have seen on the fake news world of Twitter, several claimed he was the last president since Eisenhower not to start a war, which isn't actually true. It was Reagan. But he did show military force. Most recently, you could say, with the assassination of Soleimani. So how would you characterise Trump's foreign policy approach over the last four years?

- Well, it's a great place to start, obviously, with the incumbent president. I think it, you know,

we're dealing with an extraordinary character, of course, of Donald Trump. I think we all know his foibles, his strengths, his weaknesses, the way he conducts himself. But on foreign policy, it's a very interesting approach he took. I mean, his line always was make America great again, America first. But I think because he was such an unusual character on the international scene, he did manage to shake up a lot of the complacency that you saw in the international system before Trump came in. And he achieved results.

There's no doubt about that as well. If you look at different areas of the world where he attempted to remake America's image, what Trump essentially did was shake things up and around. And in some cases, he got some very dramatic results. Now, the Middle East is the obvious place where that happened, where his policy essentially was completely different to that of the Obama administration. And let's not forget that Joe Biden was vice president in the Obama administration. We'll obviously come back to that I'm sure when considering where he's going to go.

But Trump's essential approach in the Middle East was Obama's approach was wrong, it was weak in various ways, it didn't help America out, and he was going to make a big difference. So he continued the policy of prosecuting ISIS to the maxim and he indeed ended that sort of conflict fairly quickly, committing troops to the area. He of course changed fundamentally the way that Israel is seen within the region. And he completely, again, turned the peace process, whatever you want to call it, on its head by saying, look, the Palestinians don't want to negotiate. We're going to put 'em to one side and actually go straight to the Arab nations and deal with them instead. Because it is better for America and it's better for everyone if we move in that sort of process and go there.

And of course on Iran, he tore up the previous nuclear deal saying it wasn't working for America, it wasn't working for countries in the region, and he was going to get serious. So it was a complete transformational approach, equally on China. And although the Obama administration had started what was called the pivots to Asia, the idea that America needs to move its focus away from Europe and into Asia instead, it's really been Trump's sort of aggressive approach to China that has highlighted some of the issues we all know now are real about China's strategic expansion and its sort of attempts to push its own agenda and gain influence in the world.

And you could look at other areas at the North Korean demarche, an attempt there, the way he's gone to Europe and told Europeans repeatedly, you will spend the money on defence because we're not going to bail you out. In all those cases, Trump was clear. It's got to be in America's interest, but it so happened that at least in my view, America's interest coincided with a lot of the interests of what the free world should have been pursuing anyway. So it's been an interesting confluence. And I think going forwards, people are going to have to look at Trump's record and not exactly say, we're going to throw it all out, but take the best bits of that and build on them and not destroy them.

- So now let's turn to President-elect Biden. And without getting specific on countries, 'cause

after this, we are going to do an episode of "The Amazing Race." How would you expect Biden to approach foreign policy? You know, we've seen over his decade in the Senate, examples where he took a forceful stance against apartheid in South Africa, his loud cries against genocide in Bosnia. We've seen some glimmers of his thoughts, but then we've also, as you say, had his role in the Iran deal. So how would you expect him to go forwards?

- So it's a really good question. I think we start off from the perspective, of course, that Joe Biden's been around a long time. So much of how he will approach foreign policy has already been scripted out by his own experiences in the Senate. I mean, someone pointed out actually his election victory was 48 years to the day he was first elected to the US Senate. That's a man who's been in politics, at the top level of politics, for 50 years, half a century. And the reality is that Joe Biden has seen a lot, and he also knows a heck of a lot of people internationally. He knows world leaders, he knows successive world leaders.

And it's a very interesting process considering how he will enact that on his experience and move forward. And thankfully we don't have much to discern because he's made a number of big interventions on foreign policy telling us essentially how he will act. I'm not going to be exhaustive here in response, but thematically, the Biden administration is going to be one of multilateralism. It's going to be about working with allies in pursuit of common goals. And that's going to be very different, again, to the Trump approach, which was, we are going, come with us if you want to, but we're going to do it anyway. Biden's going to attempt to create a coalition of support on the big issues of the day, whatever those issues are, and he's going to try and drive forward his view of the world collectively and bring others with them.

And one of the things you should all be looking out for is the idea of, if you like a Democratic forum, he's going to create this big summit of democracies. He wants to talk about renewing democracy, renewing the democratic world. That's going to be a big push and you can expect him as a result to firstly rejoin some of the international organisations or treaties that Trump pulled out of. And we know, for example, the Paris Climate Accord Agreement. That's step one. Biden's going to go straight back into there. We know that he will also almost certainly rejoin... Well, he will do the World Health Organisation and potentially some of the other UN agencies which Trump withdrew from.

Now, in the case of some of those, for example, the Human Rights Council, UNHRC, you have to look at those and go, I hope the Biden isn't going to go straight back in there without demanding some reforms on them because there were good reasons for why the Trump administration left those. And as we know, the UN Human Rights Council has nothing to do with human rights. It's got human rights abusers on its leadership board and body. So you need to have some cognizance of this and we need to look at what will happen in those agencies. But he's going to go back into those places.

He's probably going to try and sign up Iran again to a nuclear deal of some kind. He's in fact said, if Iran demonstrates compliance, I will sign up to a deal with them again. Now, you can

interpret that as to what that means, but it's clearly a very different position to where the Trump administration is as well. And if you come to some of the bigger questions like China and Russia in terms of how that will be approached, again, he's made it quite clear. He wishes to establish a framework of activity where, for example, China is kept within confines, but confines that aren't simply policed by the USA, a one-way relationship going this way, but two ways in the sense of the rest of the Democratic world joining and maybe some even non-democratic country is concerned about China joining in that.

So it's going to be consensual as much as that's possible. But even though it'll be consensual, don't expect it to be plain sailing. There will still be a number of issues where the US is going to clash with others. And Biden has clashed with people during his political career already, and it's quite probable he will do so again.

- Thank you. So before we dig deeper on Biden, both the House and the Senate play a role in US foreign policy, and with the Georgia runoff in January, this could have a real effect. So we've got a global audience here, and although I suspect a lot of them have spent the last six days glued to the television, could you give us all an explanation as to why the Georgia runoff is so important and what ramifications it might have for foreign policy?

- Okay, so this is a really good point, Carly, I'm pleased you've actually raised it. So as you know in the US, the system of government is split. The president handles the executive branch and will be part of the governing process, but the legislative branch is Congress. And Congress also has a role to play when it comes to enacting legislation and of course, crucially, in confirming appointments. Now, when it comes to confirming cabinet level appointments, the United States Senate is actually the body that confirms people. And all of you have seen recently, although it wasn't a cabinet level appointment, the Supreme Court justice process did of course run through the US Senate. Well, the same will be true for anyone that Joe Biden wishes to nominate to cabinet level positions, and even certain, non-cabinet level positions.

For example, ambassadors to countries. They've all got to go through the Senate. So who controls the Senate really matters in terms of getting the people he might want into place, but it also conversely has the effect of maybe forcing a degree of compromise from the president to get people in who might not be favourable to the left wing or the Democratic Party, but will be favourable to the Republicans if Republicans control the Senate. So a lot depends therefore on these two races, because if the two races in January both go to the Democrats, then the Senate will be split 50/50 and the casting vote goes to the vice President, Kamala Harris will have to trot down every time there is a vote and play the casting vote.

And she would therefore tip it to Biden's side. So that makes a difference. If the Republicans can hold onto one of those seats, you will have a situation where you've got a Democratic president and a Republican Senate. And as a result, the two sides are going to have to compromise on cabinet positions. And as a result, the main thing this will mean is when you see positions that affect the international level like the Secretary of State or the Defence Secretary, it

will mean that it is unlikely that Joe Biden will be able to appoint somebody who is opposed heavily by the Republicans. So let me give you an example. Susan Rice, who was of course a big Obama administration official. She is loathed by Republicans. There's a lot of talk that she would be Secretary of State. In my view, there's no chance of her being Secretary of State if the Republicans control the Senate because they will say, no.

However, conversely, if you look at two people close to Biden, and Chris Coons who's a senator from Delaware, in fact, he took Biden's seat there. And also Tony Blinken, who's been his long-term national security advisor. Those two would likely be confirmed by Republican senate because they're seen as moderates in that way. So it's going to have a big impact because the people who run those departments have a large say in terms of how American diplomacy and defence is carried out national security.

And if you have moderates there, they're going to have a very different sort of approach to foreign policy than people, say, more to the left of the Democratic Party. So that's why it's such an important election. You can expect everyone, even though they're all fatigued now from this election, to be throwing millions more dollars into Georgia and a lot of effort expended to see who can win those seats because it makes a big difference.

- So talking about an issue that has been obviously on the domestic agenda in the US, COVID. And even today, whilst the streets of New York and Washington were filled with celebrations, the newscasters were keen to point out the thousand deaths overnight and the record breaking number of cases today. Now, if you've read some of the recent articles from UK former prime minister, Tony Blair, he has been advocating for a long time, without a global approach to COVID, there isn't a solution. Now, what kind of committee do you see Biden putting together that perhaps may tackle this international angle of COVID?

- Well, Biden, as I mentioned earlier, is likely to work through the World Health Organisation. He will go, I will rejoin this in its total or we'll make sure we don't leave, and we will therefore work through that body to try and help and coordinate an international approach to COVID. I mean, he's been very clear about this. He says the US must return, in his view, to leadership of the world. Now, that implies leadership on issues like COVID as much as other subjects as well. But I think obviously, the first thing he'll have to do is get to grips with policy in the US, and he's going to have to work out whether he will have to exert more federal pressure and do things like a circuit breaker lockdown or a full lockdown of some kind, or if he's happy to leave it to the individual states to move in that way.

What I think you can be certain about is that he will be guided by the science, to use the terminology, and therefore that his approach will be far more like the approaches in Western Europe than they have obviously been under Trump who has ignored that scientific approach, preferring a rather different tack on that. And so expect a change I think if you're living in the US as to how COVID is dealt with, but also internationally, because the US will return to a position of wanting to work with other countries on all sorts of issues, whether it is vaccines or whether it

is how you trace the sort of the origins of the virus issues like that. And he will want America to be right at the front and centre of this as on other issues.

- So before we start to tackle specific countries, Joe Biden has intimated in the past that if he were to win, he would want the US to rejoin the Trans-Pacific Partnership. But that's not so simple with his Democratic base. So how do you assess the way forwards there?

- Well, that's a really interesting one. The twist you've put on it is of course the reality because when Trump tore up the TPP, he did so in the full knowledge that a lot of Democrats who hated the idea of untrammelled free trade, were going to... We're going to oppose it and welcome that proposal as well. So from that perspective, how does he get back? And it may well be, this could be one of those interesting bipartisan moments. When Joe Biden, who of course was part of the Obama administration that started this whole approach, may well return to it and say, we want to reengage with it, but we're going to need votes from Republicans in the Senate to do so, and this again highlights if you like a return to more normal, if you like, US politics.

The big question I think for US politics on the Republican side is, does Trumpism end with Trump? If it does in the sense, and people are willing to push that to one side, you can expect a lot of Republican senators who are free traders really despite the pretence of the last few years to go, "Well, we can sign up to this." It'll be even more likely for them to do so if Biden ties in a national security objective to this as well. Because one of the things that the TPP was going to provide was a framework if you like to restrain China once again within its confines. And if Biden starts stressing that aspect, he may well be able to bring over a few more Republicans as well. The question of course is, does he bring over the left-wing Democrats with that argument and will there be enough people to stop the treaty from going forward?

And I think I'll have to do some very careful calibration as to the numbers and whether it's worth it because no president wants to have a defeat very early on, a big issue like that. And equally he will have to be careful about this giving a shot in the arm back to the idea of Trumpism, which is this is a bad deal for America, American jobs are going to go, it's not going to help us. It's going to have to be a very serious push should he want to rejoin to make sure that there is political ballast to accompany him in that way.

- So let's dig a little deeper on that. Who are the Republicans you see who he could reach across the aisle to? You know, we've obviously got the opportunist, Lindsey Graham, who can't decide who he does or doesn't like, depending on the day of the week. And today he's on CNN congratulated Biden, and on Fox, said he's not sure the election's been called yet. But, you know, who do you see as the potential partners?

- Well, I think there are lots of people on the Republican who, who could come on board. I think the key thing to look at this isn't necessarily to go through individuals. You've just highlighted the dilemma for people like Lindsey Graham. Lindsey Graham was John McCain's best friend in Congress. He was one of the three musketeers. They voted always together. Now, Trump and

John McCain, as you know, did not get on, and Trump seriously disrespected John McCain in life and in death, in fact, which may have played a role in Arizona turning its back on Trump, or at least, you know, being very contested. The question isn't so much individuals. The question is, who sees advantage in doing deals with Biden and who sees a path, if you like, to the 2024 nomination by opposing it?

So let me give you two people in Congress to look out for. Tom Cotton and Josh Hawley, these are two Republican senators, one from Arkansas and one from, I think it's Missouri, Hawley, both of whom have been seen as being in the Trump camp of foreign policy issues, but both have got some good national security credentials. The question for people like that is, do we come on board with what Joe Biden is doing if we agree with it, or do we stick out in the hope that this is going to embolden, if you like, a base for a run in 2024, and there's going to be electoral politics coming into this kind of question.

And a lot will, again, depend on whether Biden's approach to these issues can be dressed up in national security clothes. Because the one thing that all of these, all Republicans and the Senate will be keen to do is not be seen as being weak on national security and they will have to look at that angle as well. So it depends in part on personal ambition, it depends in part on how policies are framed. And of course depends also in part as to the particular issue at hand. But I would envision that on this case, just as when Biden was in the Senate, he was able to vote across the party lines on many occasions, that you will find a lot more party shifting over here in the Senate and certainly a very different atmosphere to what has happened under the Trump administration.

- So now let's start to look at a few different countries. So let's start with Turkey. So, you know, a couple of weeks ago, Erdogan confirmed that the Russian S-400 tests had gone ahead despite the US objections. And I can see you already looked dismayed. And what do you see as the potential Biden reaction to that? Erdogan had been seen as someone that Trump could maintain some form of relationship with. But given some of Biden's position on international agreements and potential sanctions, where do you see his response?

- Well, it's an interesting place to start with Turkey because of course it's just gone completely off the rails. I mean, we know that Mr. Erdogan has an agenda. He's made no secret of his sort of lifelong, if you want to call it passive Islamism at the very best. But he's done his best in the last few years to move Turkey from a position of being a Western-facing nation and NATO ally into an abrasive regional bully attempting to sort of push its weight around and not so keen on the alliances that once it's mainstay.

Now, the question about Erdogan is whether, of course, how Biden deals with him, but it's also a question about how Erdogan sees the future as well. He's not stupid. He sees obviously where Biden's likely to go on foreign policy. Is he going to tone down his rhetoric and change his mind or is he going to force a confrontation with Biden? I think there are deep concerns in the Biden camp about how Turkey's behaving as a NATO ally. The incidents recently, as we've seen

with France, where Erdogan has led, if you like, an international coalition to attempt to hang President Macron for trying to defend his people from radicalism as terrorist attacks tells you a lot about where Erdogan is sitting right now, and I don't think you're going to have much, whereas someone like Trump that stays silent on that score, I think you will see that that Biden when it comes to international alliances will be keen to support his allies.

Now, we must hedge that on the other side with of course it was the Obama administration that made the fateful advance, if you like, to the Muslim Brotherhood. It was the Cairo speech that suggested there'd be a completely different approach to the Muslim world, and particularly to groups like the Brotherhood. You know, Biden sat in that administration for eight years and we have to wait to see how much that side comes into his thinking as well. But he's not going to have much truck with Erdogan playing games with the Russians in the way that Trump seemed to allow it. He's certainly not going to like the human rights abuses, the things that of course occur Turks have been doing with the Kurds.

They've been all sorts of, you know, kind of discussions about the Turks using Syrian Jihadists in Azerbaijan right now, in Armenia in the conflict there. There's going to be, I think... Mr. Erdogan will find it quite unpleasant dealing with Biden, whereas of course with Trump, it was all a bit mixed. At times, they got on well. At times, they got on famously badly. There was that famous occasion when Erdogan received a letter from Trump and threw it from the bin on live TV. So it's not necessarily been plain sailing, but I think it's more about where does Erdogan see Biden sitting, does he feel he can get more advantage from him by opposing him or by working with him in various ways?

- So since they were Russian made S-400s, we'll go there next. So, you know, Russia as of an hour ago, and I haven't checked since, had remained quiet on congratulating president-elect Biden. Now, you could say they're waiting for the formal acknowledgement by Trump, but, you know, Russia was also accused of interference in the 2016 election and as being described by many pundits as one of the big losers of this result. What do you see as the likely path ahead for Biden and Russia?

- Well, it's... Look, the relationship between Trump and Putin has been analysed and overanalyzed and analysed a third time, and it's a very complicated one as we always know. There's clearly some desire between the two of them to play together as big, strong men on the international scene. But what I do want to point out is that the Trump administration, the state department and beyond, actually put a very tough policy down towards Russia. Their expulsion of Russian diplomats of course, or spies, whatever you want to call them. There was a consistent attempt to roll back Russian advances in Europe and attempt to bolster the frontline states in Europe against the Russians.

And whatever you had at the top wasn't necessarily being mirrored by the State Department underneath, which was fairly resolutely anti-Russian and tough on Putin and his goons basically. So what you might of course now get is simply the top reflecting the bottom a bit better. There's

no doubt that Biden isn't going to have much time for Putin's machismo on the international stage. He does see that Putin is a major threat to Europe. And beyond the Middle East, he's thrown his weight around there as well. And there's going to be, I think, a much more frosty relationship. What, of course, Biden has to avoid is doing the infamous Hillary Clinton reset. Remember that terrible red button that appeared.

She was going to reset relations after the Bush administration. Well, that lasted about five minutes, as we all know, given what Putin did thereafter. And Putin's in a much worse place now in terms of his behaviour than he was even 10, 12 years ago. So I don't think you'll see a reset. I think you'll see maximum pressure on Russia and the Europeans will of course welcome this because they feel that Trump, at least, has sent very mixed messages to Putin about Europe and his support for Europe, and they think Biden will come in with a very strong message of support and solidarity for Europe, and that will help protect European countries against whatever plans Putin might have.

- So another regime that's been noticeably quiet has been the Chinese who you briefly touched on earlier. And, you know, reading today that there's a lot of pessimism from China around their expectations with Biden, and that actually as you touched on, they could galvanise US allies and also focus on China's human rights record and perhaps have more traction globally than Trump has had with his engagement with China. Aside from creating this group of allies, what specifics do you think Biden would push forwards?

- So let's first start with where Trump has left us in this kind of context with China. There's no doubt that his recognition of China as a strategic threat has transformed the nature of engagement with the China worldwide. We now all understand, if we didn't beforehand, and we should have understood beforehand. Some of us didn't and argued for it. We now understand that there is nothing benign about China's trade approach. Chinese have a certain strategy. It is to enhance their markets, their strategic reach, it is to increase their power, it is to be the regional hegemon at the very least in their area and push Americans out.

But, you know, to also play a role as a superpower with very different values to the US and to Europe and to other democracies internationally, and to be, if you like, a standard bearer for capitalism without a conscience or capitalism without human rights, whatever you want to term it. And, you know, on all those bases, Trump has done sterling work in exposing the Chinese for who they are, which is a nasty, brutal regime that seeks to obviously control its own people and would like to do the same to many others around the world as well. So we start from that position. The good news on China is that that was a bipartisan position. It's probably the last genuine bipartisan foreign policy issue in the US.

I used to say that about Israel, but I'm afraid Israel, because the way Democrats have gone, is no longer necessarily a bipartisan issue. But on China, there is a clear understanding on both sides of the aisle, that this is a strategic competitor that threatens the US, it threatens US allies, it threatens people in the region, it threatens its own people. It is something that has to be

tackled. So, yes, he will attempt to clump democracy together in groupings. I think what he will try and do is use trade as a tool in a different way to Trump. Trump was very keen to obviously have trade wars. Biden doesn't want to do that, but I think what he'd like to do is knit together a global, if you like, trading coalition that takes into account China's behaviour and China's ambitions in seeking and sourcing alternatives to China in various key areas. I mean, certainly if you look at strategic supply, the areas of our economy where China has monopolies, the figures are terrifying. We did a survey early this year, we saw a study, we saw that very high percentages of The Five Eyes countries for example.

That's US, UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. The key industries are dominated by supply from China. That's got to change, and I think there'll be room to work with fellow democracies to look at how do we diversify our supply, how do we make ourselves safer in that way, how to ensure that China is not using 5G as a tool for its own intelligence services and beyond. There're going to be a lot of attempts to work in that way and to constrain China through the rule of law internationally as well. And so expect a lot more FaceTime for other Asian leaders, a desire to enhance military presence there. And again, that did start under Obama, and I think China will feel the heat, but it'll be a slow cooked heat as opposed to the flair, if you like, or the flame thrower that Trump used to wield when he did these things.

- So now jumping to your neck of the words, many have focused on the special relationship between Boris and President Trump. Do you see the UK-US special relationship changing at all with Biden at the helm?

- So this is one of these topics that has been now endlessly dug into by the British press over the weekend, and and before even, 'cause there's this great concern that Boris and Biden are just not going to get on and that Boris is seen as Trump's man and a Trump populist and he even looks a bit like Trump people saying, and it's been ignored in that way. There was that Biden made, I think it was yesterday, a BBC journalist said to him, "Mr. Biden, BBC." He said, "BBC? I'm Irish." Making an interesting point about where he might sit on UK issues. But look, let's start from what the special relationship is. It's a relationship between two countries forged over 70, 80 years, longer even if you take the history over, firstly, values, but there's some crucial issues that we share intelligence on, we share military on.

And as a result, there is an institutional basis to this special relationship that exists regardless of what happens politically. So we do share this intelligence, we do often work together militarily, we do of course work together on international issues. And those things aren't going to change on a practical level, even if you've got the two principles not necessarily agreeing. And when it comes to that agreement side, looking at them, okay, yes, at first glance, you'll go, "Well, Boris and Trump were very friendly and close." But, you know, Boris Johnson's quite a likeable guy. He's the kind of guy who if you sit down with him, and no one's going to be sitting down with him in COVID times, but normally, you'll have a nice chat with him and you'll get on quite well. Biden's a gineal guy, Boris is a gineal guy, you can't see them not getting on in person.

And look, if you look back in history, there've been all sorts of unusual pairings between British prime ministers and US presidents. Who've thought, for example, that the only president that Tony Blair would get on better than his good friend Bill Clinton turned out to be George W. Bush? Now, nobody would've predicted that in 2000. They'd have gone, Clinton and Blair are like this, there's no way that Bush and Blair are going to get on. But it turned out, they got on enough to launch several wars together. So I think it's a mistake to think of the past in that way. A lot will depend on what Boris can say in his first meeting with Biden, what lines he can put out, and crucially, where the two countries can work together.

And I think, you know, all the rumours are that he's going to push out this line about, let's make a joint statement on climate change 'cause Boris is chairing the big climate change conference next year. Let's see where we can work on some of these other international issues. And the way people, of course, around Biden are saying, you know, even though the Brits have issues with Brexit, other issues, we're still going to need them militarily and other places internationally at the UN to help us, so let's give them a fair hearing. So I don't think it's going to be a difficult time for the special relationship, and I think they can, you know, any sort of angst right now can be managed with a bit of backslapping even if it's only a virtual backslapping right now.

- So one of the topics that I know many of our listeners will be keen to hear about is Israel. And, you know, much has been said over the last 18 months or so about Joe Biden's relationship with Israel. And there's been many a tweet sent today off the back of Netanyahu's very, very carefully worded congratulations. And, you know, it's well discussed that for Israel, Trump has been a very, very good friend. Whether it's been moving the embassy, the recent space of normalisation deals that really none of us thought five years ago we would see in our lifetime, and John Kerry took great pleasure in telling us none of us would see in our lifestyles. So, you know, what's your expert opinion on Biden and Israel? And additionally to that, let's bring up Kamala Harris, which has also been raised in relation to Israel.

- So it's a really interesting topic of course, because there's no doubt that looking back over the past four years, Donald Trump has a good claim to be the best friend of Israel who's ever sat in the White House. There have been so many good friends of Israel in that time. But what Trump has done in terms of some of the things you've already mentioned, but I think crucially, that the thing that he's done most of all is to, I suppose, break the idea that the Palestinians can have a lock on history moving forwards. What do I mean by that? Well, up until Trump came in, the essential conundrum for everyone was, how do you get the Palestinians onside with any deal because that's going to unlock the Middle East. That's a bit that will unlock the Middle East if we have an Arab-Israeli peace deal with the Palestinians. But what that of course gave was the Palestinians tremendous power and leverage to walk away from deals.

We know the deals they've walked away from in the last 25 years. Deal after deal after deal, the Israelis concede, concede, the Palestinians walk away. And what happens at the start of the next negotiations? You start from a position where the end of the last negotiations is where you start the next one, you move further, expecting the Israelis to give more concessions, more

concessions, more concessions. Well, Trump stops all that. His line was, we're not going to start from the position of more concessions. We're going to roll the clock back. If you are not willing to come to the table even and sit down with these Israelis, we're not going to have the whole process frozen. We're going to show you that history moves on. You can't just sit in your hands, expect the world to go, fine. You are sitting on your hands, nothing's happening. We'll show you what can be done. We'll show you that Israel can annex the Golan Heights.

We'll take it for Israel and it's Israeli territory. We'll show you that the capital of Israel is actually Jerusalem, surprisingly, not Tel Aviv. I always laugh at this sort of nonsense that people have always said it's Tel Aviv. It's rather like saying that Brighton is the capital of the UK. And you go, "No, no, London is." "No, no, I think Brighton is, and I'm going to put my embassy in Brighton." I mean, madness if you think about it from that perspective. But he moved that forward and normalised it. And at each step we were told there'd be riots, there'll be chaos, the whole Middle East will break, and it didn't happen. So the lesson from Trump is, you can move history forwards and the people who've been holding history back need to get on the train of history if they want to be part of the solution and not be bypassed.

That's how we've ended up, of course, with the normalisation agreements as well. It's basically, let's move on. Part of that of course is Iran, the threat of Iran has concentrated the minds of some of the Arab states to go, well, our issues with the Palestinians in Israel are secondary compared to the issues with Iran. So he played into that. And where does Biden go from there? Look, it's no secret that he didn't necessarily agree with all the things that Trump did. He didn't agree with the Trump peace plan, he didn't agree with moving the embassy to Jerusalem. Is Joe Biden though, if you look at his career and to Israel, of course not. He's been a very solid vote for Israel in the Senate. There's some great footage of him in the '80s and '90s talking about his support for Israel.

He's known Bibi for years. He's known him since Bibi was at the UN. They've had a long relationship. In fact, Bibi called him mishpachah, which is Hebrew for family in 2016 when he made a valedictory visit there. You've got that relationship going on. And so I don't expect Biden to roll back anything that Trump has done. What he will do though, I fear, is go back to the paradigm of allowing the Palestinians a veto on moving the Middle East forward. I mean, he's obviously not happy with Israeli activities in the West Bank, he's not happy with Palestinians not being at the table.

The question for him is, is he going to, by doing so, is he going to get the Palestinians finally to concede issues and to move to some agreement, or is he simply going to allow, delay an altercation? If it's a latter, then I'm afraid he's going to join the long list of people who have failed in the Middle East of which Trump was showing signs of being the first guy to break out of. And in fact, can lay claim to that as well. And when it comes to the Democratic Party, you mentioned Kamala Harris. Look, the Democrats is in a bad place, there's no doubt about it. The consensus that used to be the case when the Democrats were a resolutely party is going.

And Joe Biden belonged to the wrong demographic. He's the older end of the Democratic Party. People like him, Stan Hyer, others around them are heading into their '80s now, if they're not there already. I mean, Joe Biden served with Scoop Jackson, which my organization's named after, and Scoop Jackson died in 1983. But, you know, Biden spent 10 years in the Senate with him, and Jackson was the best friend of Israel on the Senate, and he was Democrat. You've got that old line, old line Democratic position, and then you've got the new line Democrats, particularly of course the squad.

We know the very anti-Israel group of Congress people who are leading that opposition supporting BDS. Kamala Harris doesn't quite sit in that camp. She's not a BDS supporter. She said she's not a BDS supporter. I know friends of mine who are on organisations like APAC, leadership positions there, tell me that they know Kamala Harris and that she is okay on Israel. They say okay. They don't say she's a flag wearing Zionist getting out there and going forth. They point out she's married to a Jew, of course, although that doesn't necessarily mean much in the context of American liberalism, how that works, but it's at least a sign she understands something about the issues.

And a lot of focus will be on how Kamala Harris as vice president does handle this Israel issue. She will come under a lot of fire from the left of her party to be the voice that's going to hold Biden to account on Israel. And she's already made comments saying that we are going to restore eight of the Palestinians and also restore links to the PLO, which Trump broke away from. So the pressure will be on her to therefore pressure Biden and she too will have an eye towards 2024 on the sort of unspoken assumption that Biden will not be the candidate then as he'll be 81, 82. But he may be, who knows?

And she will not want to annoy the left too much. And I think you may find that you'll get a lot of ambiguous statements from her on that. But just to argue back for a second on my own point, just remember, vice presidents in America have got very limited power. They only ever have any real power if the president allows him to have power. And I've got no idea yet how Joe Biden intends to run his cabinet, but I'd be surprised if it includes a massive role for the vice president because that would be counter historical as much as anything else in American politics. So it may be that Kamala will have to shout from the sidelines. Let's see what happens.

- So to switch tax to North Korea, so Biden described Trump's meeting with Kim Jong Un as photo opportunities, and yet to yield any concrete commitments. But how does Biden actually progress this issue with someone who's famously difficult to navigate?

- Well, he is not going to call him Rocket Man to start with. I mean, I think that that sort of positioning is off. When it came to North Korea, look, Trump almost provoked a war, let's not forget. Before, he then almost provoked the most unlikely peace deal in history. So he went into both accounts, and that game shows sometimes the value of someone who will shake things up and go down that approach. I think Biden's going to be much more textbook about how you deal with North Korea. He's going to talk to allies like South Korea, Japan, and he's going to say to

them, look, we need to contain this guy. If there is a chance of him giving up his nuclear weapons, then obviously we'll deal with him, but what of course he has to avoid is what happened to the Clinton administration in the '90s, which was getting sucked into endless talks with North Korea while they were building up their nuclear arsenal, making the breakthrough in that case.

I think, you know, for all the criticism of Trump to bring Kim Jong Un to the table, he then tore up the deal, if you like, and walked away, which is essentially the right thing to do in those circumstances. So Joe Biden's got to do the same thing. He's got to look at this very carefully. If there's a chance for a deal, he should go for it. But he has to make sure early on that Kim Jong Un is serious and there's no games being played. And I think, frankly, Carly, looking at the North Korean regime, it survived this long without needing to do a deal.

It's highly likely that Kim Jong Un will simply play the same game he played under Trump, which is to try and string the West along, and then kind of not give us anything in return. So I'd imagine pressure be placed through regional allies. There'll be no, you know, a strong commitment to South Korea, for example, about US troops there. And I don't expect to see much progress in terms of North Korea, but hopefully we won't see a flare up either, but that's very much in Kim Jong's hat.

- And now to another travelling part of the world, which you briefly touched on and Iran. So, you know, obviously, we know that Biden played a big role in the Iran deal and he's been upfront on his feelings that some form of engagement with Iran needs to return. What do you think the potential Iran deal could look like that Biden and Israel could live with?

- Well, this is the big question, isn't it? Because again, there's no doubt that the Trump approach had a dramatic effect on Iran's abilities to metal in its area and beyond. So the two things Trump has done very effectively is firstly applied what he's called maximum pressure on Iran. I mean, they really shut down the economics for Iran in terms of international trade, international finance. And this is a regime that is now teetering on the brink in terms of financially. It's got huge problems domestically with COVID, it's got huge problems financially, and what Trump is doing is forcing the Iranian regime into a choice, which is you can choose to spend hundreds of, you know, millions or billions of dollars on foreign adventures in Syria, in Lebanon, in Iraq, in Yemen, or you can focus on looking after your own people.

And that's the approach he's done. And I think had he stayed in or, and if he doesn't win all these sort of legal cases he's talking about, the Iranians would've had to come to the table and sign a different kind of deal, which would've labelled cash to flow just to save the regime. He also crucially did the one thing that everyone was always afraid of doing. He confronted Iran. When the Qasem Soleimani killing occurred, I remember back in... It's so long. Think about now, back in January when the world was normal still, still the same calendar year and the year started with Trump killing Qasem Soleimani, which everyone thought was going to be the most terrible thing on earth.

The Iranians would strike back, there'd be a world war, and all the rest of 'em, what happened? Iran folded. Iran folded because it was irrational for Iran to have done anything else other than fold faced with the might of the USA. If the US wants to pursue a certain cause of action with Iran, Iran's choices to resist it and be taken out or to step back, and that's what happened. So Trump showed you could take on Iran and win militarily even and do something that people felt couldn't be achieved beforehand. The question for Biden is, does he throw this all away by rushing back into a nuclear deal? And you're right to point out his support for the previous deal. And let's not forget the previous deal was given to Iran at the time, and guess what?

It was on its knees economically, and suddenly money was basically poured into its pockets again, and the regime was saved. And as a result, it was able to perform all its crazy overseas operations. So, Biden, I think, you know, not 2020 is not 2016, and it won't be next year either. He'll look back on this and go, I've got a chance. Trump has remade the Middle East here and he's made the Iran issue as well. He's already got a little bit of wiggle room because he said, I won't get back into the deal unless Iran shows compliance. Well, we know for the last year and a half, Iran has shown no compliance. Sort of term after term, has been breached by the Iranians.

Shamefully, the Europeans have stayed in the deal and ignored these breaches. It's up to Biden to decide whether he wants to go back into the deal pretending the breaches aren't there, make sure Iran complies, which is still not perfect because we know the deal has a lot of imperfections and it gives you, and it's a lot of money in exchange for not very much more than a postponement in their programme, or whether he chooses to do something completely different and starts a new deal with Iran of some kind.

He will have the European support for whatever he does, I'm sure, in this regard, which is something that they didn't give Trump in that attempt to remake that part of the Middle East. The Iranians, you've seen that all the papers in Iran have welcomed his election, which is never a good sign. But I think we've got to wait to see what he wants to do here. And I would hope that he does not throw away the progress of the past four years because if he does, Iran will back to its position of being emboldened and running terrorist operations and running interference operation in its neighbours, none of which were covered by that nuclear deal.

- So in terms of Biden's approach to refugees, so Donald Trump famously said in 2019 that he had reduced refugee resettlement by 85%. Now, the International Rescue Committee claimed that was partly due to bureaucratic impediments, but he has made a considerable effort to have the influx of refugees into America at its lowest in several decades. Biden has said he will take another look at that and intend to raise the cap to 125,000. At a time where there are huge volumes of refugees around the world, you know, many of which are coming from countries with difficult records around democracy. And as we touched on with the issue in France earlier, come with their own challenges. Where do you see Biden landing on the issue of refugees?

- Well, I think this is obviously one of the signature points to Democratic Party right now. I mean, Trump was so anti-refugee in his rhetoric and in the reality of what he was trying to do. And you saw this issue of, look, he's separating families, he's keeping kids from their parents, all that sort of emotional pull. Biden's going to find it very difficult to fight that from the Democratic Party even if he wanted to, which I don't think he does. I think he genuinely does see a role in the US as opening doors for people to come to you. In one sense, America's always been that great melting pot, of course, of accepting people from non-democracies.

You know, many people who have come from non-democracies to the US and become very good naturalised Americans. I think the travel and the difference now is that America itself is so divided and has found it so difficult to integrate people in a way it never used to do that having a larger influx of refugees at any given moment, particularly people from very different parts of the world, who may not buy into American values, requires a very strong integration as setting. It's rather like, anywhere you can... The reality is anywhere in the world, you can integrate as many refugees as you can if you've got the system that enables you to do so if you're strong and confident in what you are and what you are going to teach.

I fear though that some, you know, in the hard left part of the Democratic Party will view this as a great opportunity to teach their version of civics, which is basically that America's wrong and that America owes the rest of the world a debt for all it's done, and particularly white America falls into that glance. And if you're going to start teaching migrants that, you can imagine the outcome of it. So I think before you go for a migration policy, you have to go for an integration policy. What is his integration policy?

He hasn't said. Is he going to allow the far left, the Democratic Party, to run that sort of thing? If he is, this is going to be a disaster for America because the people who come in will not end up becoming Americans, so they'll end up importing their own values into America, not the other way around. And America's always work best when they make Americans out of people, not vice versa.

- So another one of Trump's legacies that Biden will contend with is his stance with Hong Kong. And, you know, we've touched on China and the approach there, and I understand that many don't expect him to roll back the tough approach that Trump took with Hong Kong, but do you see he just continues or does he come up with some kind of new approach?

- Well, it's very difficult to come up with a new approach on your own towards China because, what are you going to do? You're not going to launch an attack on China, you're not going to have any military capabilities to do that. Your only hope is to sort of work with allies to hold China's behaviour to account in international forums, in international law, and looking at ways you could punish China through things like sanctions and other factors. So I do think on human rights, there will be a big stress on human rights.

He's spoken extensively throughout his career on the importance of human rights, and how the

US has to lead on that issue, and that was something we didn't hear that much under Trump administration, although to its credit on Xinjiang with the Uyghur genocide there. We did hear it. And so I think it's going to be more of the same in that he will be keen to push back on China, but there'll be a bigger stress on human rights and maybe on sanctioning individuals who will do so, who abuse them. And of course that will reflect what's happening in Hong Kong.

I think there'll be maybe action against people in Hong Kong because that'll be a good way of showing China there is some consequence for their suppression of democracy and for international treaties there. So I'd expect that to be the case, as well as, of course, an attempt to get other countries on board so that everyone introduces sanctions at once rather than just peacemeal in the way that you might see otherwise.

- So finally, let's touch on the European Union. So we didn't really touch on Brexit, but, you know, the EU has been struggling for a while now. And when Brexit passed, there were many who thought that others may swiftly follow suit. Is reestablishing strong relationships with Biden, the EU is Hail Mary or are they still in trouble?

- It's a Hail Mary. I mean, on this score, Biden is an old established American politician who sees Europe as, ah, the European Union is a good way of kind of approaching the whole situation. So Trump was consciously anti EU. He didn't like its stress on super nationalism. He preferred obviously a nationalistic approach in various ways, and he did his best to chivvy away at how the Europeans behave. The dangers that Biden goes straight back in and goes to the European Union collectively, we're back on track and I will be working with you on issues without any need for reform.

Now, the silver lining to this is that he may take a hybrid approach. He may say, look, I want to deal with the European Union, but actually some of the things Trump was saying, and which other American president have said, like the need to spend on defence and the need to get serious about your own security rather than relying on America, it gives him an opportunity to push on those things too. I think the Germans will be very happy that he's back, given that Trump was provoking all kinds of trade issues with them, claiming that there were issues with German trade and he was going to maybe put sanctions on the cars and things like that.

The French will obviously welcome Biden because it gives an opportunity for a European Union style approach. Even though Macron was quite happy to work independently of Trump and try to drive a French view, now he can take just a Pan-European view in a different way. The Italian reaction was quite kind of promising for Biden as well. You've got a number of European countries, you're going to just welcome him from that basis. The Irish of course, because of that whole island connection are very happy that Mr. Biden is going to take the White House, is an Irish American in the day, and they'll have that.

The UK does risk being the odd one out because it's no longer in the EU and because there are all these question marks about the Brexit deal. But again, you know, Biden needs to make sure

the Europeans pull their weight. There's no point in simply coming back and telling them that everything's okay, we can go back to 2016. It's now, again, 2020, not 2016. Europeans have to pull their weight, Europeans have to get serious internationally, and Europeans are going to have to work with America and listen to the American president when he wants to do something. And that may be a shock to some of the Europeans. So we have this, the glass is half full on one side, half empty on the other.

- So let's be glass half full for our last question. What do you think is the greatest opportunity for the world in terms of foreign policy under a Biden presidency?

- Look, I think in a sense, a half full side is that again, whether fairly or unfairly, looking at the Trump foreign policy, the world has collectively breathed the sigh of relief that he's gone. I mean, there are exceptions, but most leaders of most countries. And if you did polls in most, say, European countries, they came out saying heavy wins for Biden in terms of what people supported and what they wanted to see from the US president. So the glass half full bit is that everyone is relieved to have Joe Biden in the White House as opposed to dealing with Donald Trump. And that's a good start, of course, when it comes to alliances.

So the basic prognosis for alliances is, good, you've got someone who believes in alliances in the White House, you've got someone who at this moment in time at least is seen as being a good guy, as someone who they can do business with. And as a result, that cannot be a bad thing if the world's great democracies get together to focus on some of the big challenges that are coming our way or are already here and will be with us in the next decade and beyond. And if Biden can do anything, it is about creating that feel good message to make sure that people stand with him. But as always, it's about what he chooses to do with that. It's fine having a goodwill message. Obama was great at that, by the way.

I mean his great rhetoric, his soaring ideas, the sort of, you know, you could listen to him for hours, but what did he use that for? If you look internationally, very little. He didn't move things forward, he didn't change the paradigms and he probably had the ability to do that given his own rhetoric and the power to do that. So the question for Biden is, do you take this opportunity? You're the fresh broom, you're coming in to sweep up the place. People are willing to give you time and space. Do you use that to move the international agenda forward and tackle some of the issues that Trump started doing or do you waste your time at basically sitting around, glad-handing, Backslapping, doing very little while the challenges multiply.

And I think that on the glass half full side, Biden is aware of this and wants to get cracking straight away on an international agenda. If he does, there is a good chance that we will continue momentum in some of these areas that we saw under Trump and that even some of our worst fears will not be realised under a Biden presidency.

- Thank you, Alan, very much. Well, I'm not sure how much faith we're going to put in pollsters in Europe as they didn't do very well in the US. And I think that industry may need to rethink. I'm

going to hand back over to Wendy. Thank you very much.

- Alan, thank you for that fascinating hour. Having your insight to help us assess the president-elect has been a wonderful opportunity. It's been a rollercoaster of a week, but I now hope this is an opportunity for America and the world to heal. To quote Rabbi Sacks who spoke at Lockdown University, "To focus on the we rather than the I, a lesson more important now than ever before as we face a worldwide challenge that we can overcome together to realise there is more that unites us than divides." I believed in and supported you, Alan, Douglas, and the Henry Jackson Society for many years and have watched how this amazing organisation has grown over the last two decades.

Alan, thank you for this very stimulating hour. Your success has given me so much . Please give your gorgeous and smart wife, Claudia, and your two adorable children, a big warm hug from me. Thank you, Carl. As always, thank you to all of you who have joined us tonight. And on that note, I'd like to say goodnight to those of you who are now going to sleep. And to those of you who are still in the States, enjoy the rest of your day. Thanks, Alan. Night, night.