

Seminar: Bilanz und Perspektiven der amerikanischen Außenpolitik unter Präsident George W. Bush

Referatsthema: Außenpolitische Positionen im Wahlkampf: Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten für die zukünftige amerikanische Außenpolitik

Barack Obama

Soundbytes:

August 2007 erste Rede die Beachtung fand: Obama stated that as President he would consider military action in Pakistan in order to attack al-Qaeda, even if the Pakistani government did not give approval. Obama said, "I will not hesitate to use military force to take out terrorists who pose a direct threat to America."

After weeks of discourse surrounding the policy, Obama said there was misreporting of his comments, saying that, "I never called for an invasion of Pakistan or Afghanistan." He clarified that rather than a surge in the number of troops in Iraq, there needs to be a "diplomatic surge" and that if there were "actionable intelligence reports" showing al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden in Pakistan, the U.S. troops as a last resort should enter and try to capture terrorists. That would happen, he added, only if "the Pakistani government was unable or unwilling" to go after the terrorists.

Obama has declared many times that he would draw a far different line from Bush's. His campaign web site says: "The United States is trapped by the Bush-Cheney approach to diplomacy that refuses to talk to leaders we don't like. Not talking doesn't make us look tough — it makes us look arrogant, it denies us opportunities to make progress, and it makes it harder for America to rally international support for our leadership." It goes on to say, "Obama is willing to meet with the leaders of all nations, friend and foe. He will do the careful preparation necessary, but will signal that America is ready to come to the table, and that he is willing to lead."

The notion stems from the Democrats' CNN-YouTube Debate of July 23, 2007, when a viewer named Steve asked the candidates whether—in the spirit of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's bold trip to Jerusalem—they would be willing to talk with the leaders of Iran, Syria, Venezuela, Cuba, and North Korea "without preconditions" during their first year in office.

To the surprise of many, Obama answered, "I would." A presidential visit is special; it shouldn't be undertaken unless the outcome is all but known in advance.

Even some of Obama's own staff asked him after the debate whether he wanted to retract the remark. No, he told them, he meant what he said. He clarified later that there would have to be an *agenda*—he wasn't keen on talking for the sake of talking—but "preconditions," which means a great deal more, shouldn't be required.

On Tuesday, hours before Obama clinched the Democratic nomination, McCain, signaling the start of the general election, told a crowd in New Orleans, "Americans ought to be concerned about the judgment of a presidential candidate who says he's ready to talk, in person and without conditions, with tyrants from Havana to Pyongyang."

And so it's worth taking a look at what Obama actually said during that July 23 debate. Here is his full reply:

I would [be willing to meet with those leaders], and the reason is this: The notion that somehow not talking to countries is punishment to them—which has been the guiding diplomatic principle of this administration—is ridiculous. ... [Ronald Reagan and John Kennedy talked with Soviet leaders because] they understood that we may not trust them, and they may pose an extraordinary threat to us, but we have the obligation to find areas where we can potentially move forward.

Obama added, referring to the countries that the questioner listed, "It is a disgrace that we have not spoken with them." For instance, he said, we need to talk with Iran and Syria, if only about Iraq, "because if Iraq collapses, they're going to have responsibilities."

In an interview with *BBC's HARDtalk* on March 6, 2008, Obama foreign policy adviser Samantha Power stated that Obama's pledge to "have all [US] combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months" was a "best case scenario" that "he will revisit when he becomes president." She continued, saying that "what we can take seriously is that he will try to get US forces out of Iraq as quickly and responsibly as possible."

Zusammenfassung:

IRAK

Ending the War in Iraq

Judgment You Can Trust: As a candidate for the United States Senate in 2002, Obama put his political career on the line to oppose going to war in Iraq, and warned of "an occupation of undetermined length, with undetermined costs, and undetermined consequences." Obama has been a consistent, principled and vocal opponent of the war in Iraq:

- In 2003 and 2004, he spoke out against the war on the campaign trail;
- In 2005, he called for a phased withdrawal of our troops;
- In 2006, he called for a timetable to remove our troops, a political solution within Iraq, and aggressive diplomacy with all of Iraq's neighbors;
- In January 2007, he introduced legislation in the Senate to remove all of our combat troops from Iraq by March 2008.
- In September 2007, he laid out a detailed plan for how he will end the war as president.

Bring Our Troops Home: Obama will immediately begin to remove our troops from Iraq. He will remove one to two combat brigades each month, and have all of our combat brigades out of Iraq within 16 months. Obama will make it clear that we will not build any permanent bases in Iraq. If al Qaeda attempts to build a base within Iraq, he will keep troops in Iraq or elsewhere in the region to carry out targeted strikes on al Qaeda.

Press Iraq's leaders to reconcile: As we remove our troops, Obama will engage representatives from all levels of Iraqi society – in and out of government – to seek a new accord on Iraq's Constitution and governance. The United Nations will play a central role in this convention.

Regional Diplomacy: Obama will launch the most aggressive diplomatic effort in recent American history to reach a new compact on the stability of Iraq and the Middle East. This effort will include all of Iraq's neighbors – including Iran and Syria.

IRAN

But Obama believes that we have not exhausted our non-military options in confronting this threat; in many ways, we have yet to try them. That's why Obama stood up to the Bush administration's warnings of war, just like he stood up to the war in Iraq.

Diplomacy: Obama is the only major candidate who supports tough, direct presidential diplomacy with Iran without preconditions. If Iran abandons its nuclear program and support for terrorism, we will offer incentives like membership in the World Trade Organization, economic investments, and a move toward normal diplomatic relations. If Iran continues its troubling behavior, we will step up our economic pressure and political isolation.

Renewing American DIPLOMACY

Talk to our Foes and Friends: Obama is willing to meet with the leaders of all nations, friend and foe. He will do the careful preparation necessary, but will signal that America is ready to come to the table, and that he is willing to lead. And if America is willing to come to the table, the world will be more willing to rally behind American leadership to deal with challenges like terrorism, and Iran and North Korea's nuclear programs.

Strengthen NATO: Obama will rally NATO members to contribute troops to collective security operations, urging them to invest more in reconstruction and stabilization operations, streamlining the decision-making processes, and giving NATO commanders in the field more flexibility.

Nuclear Weapons

- **A Record of Results:** The gravest danger to the American people is the threat of a terrorist attack with a nuclear weapon and the spread of nuclear weapons to dangerous regimes. Obama has taken bipartisan action to secure nuclear weapons and materials:
 - He joined Senator Dick Lugar in passing a law to help the United States and our allies detect and stop the smuggling of weapons of mass destruction throughout the world.
 - He joined Senator Chuck Hagel to introduce a bill that seeks to prevent nuclear terrorism, reduce global nuclear arsenals, and stop the spread of nuclear weapons.

And while other candidates have insisted that we should threaten to drop nuclear bombs on terrorist training camps, Obama believes that we must talk openly about nuclear weapons – because the best way to keep America safe is not to threaten terrorists with nuclear weapons, it's to keep nuclear weapons away from terrorists.

John McCain

Soundbytes:

On January 3, 2008 at a campaign stop in Derry, New Hampshire, when a questioner said, "President Bush has talked about our staying in Iraq for 50 years," McCain responded: "Make it a hundred. We've been in Japan for 60 years, we've been in South Korea for 50 years or so. That'd be fine with me as long as Americans are not being injured or harmed or wounded or killed. That's fine with me. I hope it will be fine with you if we maintain a presence in a very volatile part of the world where Al Qaeda is training, recruiting, equipping, and motivating people every single day."

In a May 15, 2008 speech in Columbus, Ohio, McCain said:

“By January 2013, America has welcomed home most of the servicemen and women who have sacrificed terribly so that America might be secure in her freedom. The Iraq War has been won....Iraq is a functioning democracy, although still suffering from the lingering effects of decades of tyranny and centuries of sectarian tension. Violence still occurs, but it is spasmodic and much reduced....The United States maintains a military presence there, but a much smaller one, and it does not play a direct combat role.”

Zusammenfassung:

IRAK:

Strategy for Victory in Iraq

The Importance of Succeeding

John McCain believes it is strategically and morally essential for the United States to support the Government of Iraq to become capable of governing itself and safeguarding its people. He strongly disagrees with those who advocate withdrawing American troops before that has occurred.

Support the Successful Counterinsurgency Strategy

John McCain has been a leading advocate of the “surge” and the counterinsurgency strategy carried out by General David Petraeus. At the end of 2006, four years of a badly conceived military strategy that concentrated American troops on large bases brought us near to the point of no return. Sectarian violence in Iraq was spiraling out of control. Al Qaeda in Iraq was on the offensive. Entire provinces were under extremists’ control and were deemed all but lost. At that critical moment, John McCain supported sending reinforcements to Iraq to implement a classic counterinsurgency strategy of securing the population.

On January 10, 2007, President Bush announced the commitment of more than 20,000 additional troops as a part of the Iraqi troop surge of 2007. McCain was a leading advocate for the move, leading some Democrats to call the policy the "McCain Doctrine".

“I do not want to keep our troops in Iraq a minute longer than necessary to secure our interests there. Our goal is an Iraq that can stand on its own as a democratic ally and a responsible force for peace in its neighborhood. Our goal is an Iraq that no longer needs American troops. And I believe we can achieve that goal, perhaps sooner than many imagine. But I do not believe that anyone should make promises as a candidate for President that they cannot keep if elected. To promise a withdrawal of our forces from Iraq, regardless of the calamitous consequences to the Iraqi people, our most vital interests, and the future of the Middle East, is the height of irresponsibility. It is a failure of leadership.“

IRAN

McCain has also said "the military option cannot be taken off the table" in dealing with Iran, although he sees it as a "last option".

GLOBAL

In In March 2008, McCain said that the United States should "strengthen our global alliances as the core of a new global compact -- a League of Democracies -- that can harness the vast influence of the more than one hundred democratic nations around the world to advance our values and defend our shared interests." He said that the United States did not single-handedly win the Cold War, but rather the NATO alliance did so, "in concert with partners around the world."

October 2007, McCain again called for removal of Russia from the G8:

Today, we see in Russia diminishing political freedoms, a leadership dominated by a clique of former intelligence officers, efforts to bully democratic neighbors, such as Georgia, and attempts to manipulate Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas. We need a new Western approach to this revanchist Russia. The G8 should again become a club of leading market democracies: it should include Brazil and India but exclude Russia.

However, in May 2008, McCain said that he would support friendly talks with Russia on nuclear armaments, distancing himself from the Bush administration.

LINKS:

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070701faessay86401-p0/barack-obama/renewing-american-leadership.html>

<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20071101faessay86602-p0/john-mccain/an-enduring-peace-built-on-freedom.html>

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<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,563785,00.html>

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