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“ADVANCING DIVERSITY”

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Interview with Professor Scott Lucas

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Question: *Prof. Scott Lucas, thank you so much for accepting our interview request for the Political Reflection Magazine. It is a privilege for me to conduct this interview with you. As one of your former students at Birmingham University, it is an honour to hear your thoughts about the US election 2020. I have so many questions to pose but little time to cover all. Since you are constantly appearing on major international TV channels about American politics and streaming daily news on your own website, anyone can follow you on <https://eaworldview.com> for your further thoughts if we cannot find enough time to cover all issues.*

Well, let me begin with my first question.

As an American citizen and a scholar working on American politics, have you ever witnessed this kind of election campaign and results? What is unique about the election in 2020? Why was it so popular in the rest of the world? For instance, many news channels worldwide covered the US Election nearly all days and even many ordinary people involved in the discussion about the American election.

Scott Lucas: It is a great honour to be here. So, thank you so much. You know it is very impressive what you are doing in CESRAN International and for Political Reflection Magazine. It has been impressive what you have done in all areas of international politics, including US politics. However, your question reminds me that when I moved from being an academic to also working as a journalist back in 2008, we started what was then Enduring American (EA) (it is now eaworldview.com). Nevertheless, back in 2008, it launched on the evening of the election and that, of course, was the Obama vs McCain election, and we thought that was historic because it was the first black American candidate for president and he triumphed. In the months after that, you know his inauguration whether you have got more than a million people that are watching it was like this idea this America coming out of the Iraq War but still in the middle of the Iraq War he was like things can change for the better in the US.

This was a historic election 12 years later but in a very different way because whereas the Obama election 2008 was not just that I have hope and change without the idea of responsibility, that idea of competence, and that idea of an American Community working together. This election was very much going to be around that figure of Donald Trump which is so different, and it is not just what we might say that Donald Trump is not necessarily

competent and what he has done as president. It is not necessarily that he has not exactly shown an engagement with the issues you and I want to talk about because it does not matter to Trump; it did not matter to Trump. In the idea of this was us vs them politics that it was his quote base MAGA (Make America Great Again) versus those that he thought with the enemies and the real question was going to be we thought that would be resolved on Election night would that message went out. Because when you talk about Trump in terms of US versus them, it is not just his supporters versus his opponents. It is Trump versus the American system, and it is Donald Trump versus the courts, versus Congress, versus the fake news media, versus professors like you and me.

It is Donald Trump versus everybody and that type of politics I think is the greatest challenge to the American system in combination with issues like Trump-Russia, Trump-Ukraine, government shutdowns, destruction of the environment, probably the most important American election in America since the American Civil War of 1860 and I am not exaggerating that for a fact I mean I honestly believe that it did not stop on Election night so what makes this a doubly historic election is that for the first time we have got a candidate who happens to be still the president who is refusing to accept the outcome of the election. You know, it is like okay I won in all caps on Twitter I won and if you say I did not win you are wrong because the election was stolen from me what makes that second part of the history so now not just Trump.

If I can define the election what makes that second historical point so significant is, he told us months ago, he will do this. Donald Trump in an interview with Fox News in July when they said when Chris Wallace interview asked “will you accept the outcome of the election” and Trump said “Well no, I do not, We will see” and then when he appointed rush through the confirmation of the Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett that she had to be on the bench before election day I want 9 Justice Supreme Court in case they have to hear a case about millions of fraudulent ballots there are not real. The Fragile balance out there is going to say that take it all the way to the Supreme Court so they could overturn the election which is precisely what we are in right now so it is almost like this would be like the crime of the American Century, but it is like the criminal saying I am going to do it, I am going to do it, try and stop me.

Question: *Because some people believed that Covid-19 played a massive role in the election results, Trump would have won the election if there was no pandemic. In fact, by obtaining around 65 million votes, Trump has done a better job than any of the previous republican candidates in history. Do you think it is because of the Trump's personality or his way of conducting politics because before and after the elections there seemed to be a really huge polarization in American society and even in the world? What did the Trump era teach us about American politics; can we say that America has divided into two big camps? More importantly, when do you think that Trump concedes the election results?*

Scott Lucas: I have been saying for months I am going to write a book about America after Trump and I am still trying to figure out the line on it because of that question that you have just raised, and that is as we speak, and there are still a few more ballots to be counted, but Joe Biden has almost 80 million votes we need to note that, but Donald Trump has 73 million. This is in a context where I thought because of coronavirus; I thought it would be extremely difficult for him to win because he is mishandled the pandemic. I mean and point-blank coronavirus does not just kill republicans or democrats it kills across the political spectrum, and the death toll is now not only more than 256 thousand it is going back up. About 1200-1400 Americans are dying a day and no sign of that stopping because of the crisis's mismanagement, pandemic, therefore the economic consequences of the pandemic, and despite the almost chaotic way in which you dealt with it. Yes, all these people voted for Trump, and you have to say why?

I think there is the general answer which we start with which is America has/was polarized before Donald Trump, that it has to do with the type of media in America where you have a polarized media environment, so it moves from being discussion media to being attacked media it has to do with the basics since the 1990s that the republicans were initially rejecting bipartisan approaches in congress this starting in 1994 with Newt Gingrich who is still around and still being very damaging on media. The idea of cooperation which has, sort of, being, of course, the republicans and the democrats go after each other, but there still were ideas that both on domestic politics and foreign policy you could find bipartisan areas where they agree. That dissolved over a generation before Trump, but I think you have to go further because I think it is too easy to say it is a polarized media about Trump that exploited that polarization. Because I have got both my parents are diehard Trump supporters in the state of Georgia which was one of the critical states in this election, some of my relatives are diehard Trump supporters. Some of them are Republicans who have broken away from Trump. The best way I can explain that to you living through it almost daily in terms of discussing politics with them is that Trump is a snake oil salesman that what he did in 2016 was he came in with many people still having the effects of the great recession of 2008-2009. He said I could make it better for you. I can make it better for you because I will stand up to the Chinese, let us blame them, or I will stand up to immigrants let's blame them, or I will stand up to other people of colour let's blame them, or I will stand up to the left whatever the left is.

So it did two things: he told people all right, things will get better if we put this guy in the office, but secondly, if things do not get better, this guy will take care of the people who have made things so wrong. Four years later, I think the lesson is that even though things did not get better for many people, it has not gotten better for America. These have been arguably the most destructive four years for America outside of wartime. Once you entrench yourself with a snake oil salesman, you get deeper and deeper in believing it has got to get better; it will get better now. The snake-oil never works, and the snake oil salesman is never in it for you; he is only in it for

himself, but you still want to believe. So, I think the importance of this for me is looking beyond Trump is you have got to recognize that merely going out and saying we will simply appeal to those people who voted for Joe Biden. We will work with them to be constructive that you cannot do just that you have got to reach out to those folks who voted for Trump and figure out was it anger, fear, resentment what is it that you can establish a line of dialogue with them. Because at the end of the day Americans whomever they voted for, have got an interest in decent housing they have got an interest in decent education for their kids, they have got an interest in decent health care especially right now to a pandemic for their families, they have got an interest in having jobs, so you have got to reach out on those common interests to those folks and not use this “us versus them” type of politics with them even as you have to recognize that Donald Trump is not going to go away. His media supporters are not going to go away, and they are going to keep practising division that makes it doubly important that you reach out to folks who have supported him and say it does not have to be this way.

Question: *Okay, thank you so much that I would come to this question because you raised a really nice point here as far as I understand that Trump did not polarize it was an already polarized system before he elected. Basically, he just touched many Americans' feelings, and he actually had some really nice maybe catchy slogan saying that “Make America Great Again” and I think the Biden administration will face more difficulties at home than abroad. I will be happy if you can elaborate on these questions with a specific reference to this Trumpism concept. I think you are just underlying this Trumpism concept because some people also believe that Trump may lose the election, and you also said that Trumpism would exist.*

Scott Lucas: So, I guess let me take that in two parts. Let me start with the positive part first. There are many folks who quite rightly say the Biden administration runs into difficulties immediately. Because even if Donald Trump is dragged out of the White House on January 20th, you have got a 50-50 senate at best, which means the vice president Kamala Harris is the deciding vote, but that is at best. I mean the republicans could have a majority of up to 52-48 depending on how these two elections go in Georgia on January the 5th then you have got a democratic majority in the house, which is diminished they still have the majority. However, it has been reduced, and so the idea of significant sweeping legislation thinks about Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first 100 days during the depression. Think about the idea of John F. Kennedy's first 100 days with all those you know both at home and abroad big messages, significant legislation. It will be challenging to say have a green new deal you know that 3 trillion dollars package that Biden and his advisors are talking about to link economic recovery with environmental protection. It is going to be difficult to expand Obama Care immediately vastly. It will be difficult to make major changes

for immigration reform immediately, but that is only part of what you can do see the power of the executive lies in that a lot of what you can do does not depend upon congress. There is a very simple first step in this, the Biden administration from day one can try to get control of the pandemic and indeed that is what they have been signalling. I mean the first meetings that Biden and Kamala Harris had after the democratic national convention in August was with medical and public health experts and some of the first meetings they had after Biden was confirmed as president-elect has been with medical public health and technology experts and the executive what we have seen is the lesson of this corona's pandemic has that the executive branch under Donald Trump has not coordinated with the states has not worked with the states, has no interest in doing so and that has led to a great deal of destruction, damage, and death.

Well, Biden and Harris can begin to reverse that, Biden and Harris can begin to work with people in terms of economic measures to limit the economic consequences even if Mitch McConnell the Senate majority leader says no stimulus package. The Biden administration can work on protecting environmental regulations restoring some of the regulations that Donald Trump has gotten rid of it can protect what we call the dreamers those seven hundred thousand they were children of undocumented immigrants that were protected under by the Obama administration, some of them are now in the armed forces, some of them now have jobs some of them are at universities. Biden can issue an executive order which says they cannot be deported, which is what Trump is threatening to do, they can protect legal immigrants who have been threatened with restrictions on their public benefits. They can protect Obamacare by preventing further destruction of it, so in other words, you can take all these very practical steps within the executive without having to have new legislation. Why is that important at the end of the day?

On the one hand, you have got competence responsibility and effectiveness. On the other hand, you have referred to Trumpism, but what is Trumpism is not competence. It is not effectiveness. It is slogans; it is a type of rhetoric, a type of behaviour which is this type of divisive politics. I think that will pose problems for the Republican Party because the Republican Party and I are talking about people like senate majority leader Mitch McConnell the house minority leader Kevin McCarthy. They have enabled Trump for almost four years while he has been president, they protected him over the Trump-Russia Scandal where Trump did commit crimes and may be prosecuted for them on day one after he leaves office, they protected him over the Trump-Ukraine Scandal where Trump did commit crimes but was protected. They protected him over a government shutdown over a national emergency they protected him over I could go on and on. Do they protect Trump while he is outside of the office and trying to run for president 2024 or do they say enough is enough that's a huge question for them, but the bigger question is Trumpism versus the Biden administration? One of the reasons why at the end of the day Joe Biden is president of the US why it is his advisors who are in and why there are many state-local leaders who have been re-elected is because they said it is

about what you do it is about unity and it is about protecting all Americans. If they maintain that line against Trumpism, that is the best answer to it. Will it stop divided media? Will it stop the disinformation? No, but it provides an alternative to that type of this division and disinformation that can last throughout the Biden administration and then we see what happens in the next four years after that.

Question: *Let me take the issue from inside or home politics or domestic politics to the abroad and some foreign policies because there was kind of like a different dimension of the Trump with the international actually with some major powers such as China, Russia and EU. So, related to this, how do you think that Biden will approach these major powers? What will he do with China and Russia and transatlantic dimensions or maybe you can think about like some emerging powers like India and Brazil?*

Scott Lucas: I think the first thing in considering Biden's foreign policy as well as his domestic policy is, he is going to bring the adults back in the room and by that, I mean one of the features of the Trump administration. Because it is Trump versus, everybody has been that he has badly damaged US agencies. He fired people across departments, and he had insulted them even people like the former general James Mattis when he left his secretary of defence or H.R. McMaster when he left his national security adviser. Trump has said that the CIA were Nazis; I am not lying go back to who are trying to overthrow him. He has gone after the FBI, and he has gone after the state department, he is dismissing people in the Pentagon even as we speak including the defence secretary Mark Esper.

The first thing that the Obama administration does, and it will be signalled tomorrow with his first appointments to the cabinet, is I will bring back responsible people. I will respect them, and I will work with them so his first secretary of state will be Anthony Blinken who has worked with Biden for decades and is extremely capable. I think you will see Michèle Flournoy possibly his defence secretary the former assistant secretary of state for Africa has become the UN ambassador or will be the UN ambassador tomorrow these are people who have decades of experience. They were all in the Obama administration. So, they have known factors I think that is the easy part though I think the difficult part is to recognize that there will be a huge series of foreign policy challenges in part because Trump has been so destructive but in part even before that this is a changing world where you are not talking about America as the leading power, and it is probably time to recognize that.

So, let us take China, for example, it is not a question of America and China carving up the world, but it is a question of the rules of the game instead of having trade wars and threatening to break each other economically instead of talking about a possible war in the South China Sea you have firm negotiations firm and clear-eyed negotiations. So, when it comes to, let's say China you are not going to see the destructive trade wars that took

place or have taken place under Trump. You are not going to see the posturing over the South China Sea with the threat of confrontation but what you have is from negotiations across a series of outstanding topics, topics like intellectual property, topics like the relationship between the currencies, topics between global economic visions between the long-standing American vision since World War II versus what we call tend to call China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which is an alternative in organizing countries economically and so those negotiations you do not go in assuming it is going to be sweetness and light, but at least you play by the rules.

For example, when it tops like Russia, you will not have the unpredictability of a president who quite frankly may have been put into office in part because of Russia because his campaign cooperated Russian 2016. You are not going to have a president who at the very least has been dragging his feet on measures by his agencies to deal with the Russians, and you are not going to have a president in Donald Trump who quite frankly is a fervent admirer of Vladimir Putin because he wants to be Vladimir Putin. You will have an administration that will have to deal with Russia, which has been very ambitious in its policy in Eastern Europe; think about Ukraine, Russia has been very ambitious some would say aggressive in what it has done in the Middle East think about Syria. You have been a Russia which has been more than ambitious it is actually broken international law to the extent of carrying out assassinations or attempted assassinations think about the nerve agent attack in Salisbury, England in 2018. In other words, Russia has not played by international rules.

Without this being an anti-American or pro-Americans thing, in other words, you know America yay or America boo when it comes to the Middle East again you have to be clear-eyed. I mean there is a whole series of problems. I have to cover daily; there you have got a Saudi Arabian Monarchy that has been willing to kill its opponents abroad. Including the journalist Jamal Khashoggi, you have got Saudi Arabia which has been involved with some very deadly conflicts such as Yemen, you have got a Saudi Arabian de facto leader in the crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman who has moved aggressively against his domestic rivals whether you are talking about other princes or whether you are talking about political dissenters. However, at the same time, Saudi Arabia is an important state because of the oil. Because it has been a military ally of the US what does the Biden administration do?

There is no easy answer there. When you talk about Israel-Palestine you are not going to get this blatantly one-sided approach which is let's move the US embassy to Jerusalem, let's allow Israel to at least maintain the West Bank settlements possibly expand them. Let's cut off all US assistance to Palestine. You will probably get a Biden administration that will restore assistance involvement in international programs in the Palestinian territories, and you will get a Biden administration that will reiterate that it wants to see a Palestinian state. Nevertheless, it will not push Israel into pulling back from the West Bank settlements, and it is not bringing Israel

back to the negotiations table with Palestine. Let alone the complicating factor of bringing the different Palestinian groups Hamas and Al-Fatah together.

I guess what I am saying we go around every area of the world you talk about India in this way; we could talk about Venezuela in this way. That is those problems that are there quite often with deep-seated roots do not disappear when America comes in, but I am looking for two things one is I am looking for competence rather than Donald Trump's ego and secondly what I am looking at is a change in American policy a recognition which is we are no longer in the words of Joseph Nye. The power that leads America makes a contribution, but it makes a contribution as part of an international community now in certain places. It may have more influence than others, but it does so truly want to cooperate because of the reasons that got us into this foreign policy mess. Think about the 2003 Iraq War was the idea that America could remake the world, and the rest of the world could follow. It does not work that way anymore

Question: *So, as far as I understand like I think in this week the Biden administration will be explaining the key teams who are going to be in the White House, and you gave some name I think Anthony Blinken for you is going to be the foreign minister and no chance for Susan Rice because Turkey was wondering about Susan Rice and Bill Burns or Jake Sullivan.*

Scott Lucas: Well, there is the story that Jake Sullivan may become the national security adviser. So, I think it will raise interesting questions for countries like Turkey as they face it. Susan Rice is an interesting one I mean Susan Rice many people were lobbying for her to have a key position in the Biden administration as she did in the Obama administration as the ambassador of the UN and the national security advisor. However, there is political baggage with Susan Rice because she is an easy target for the republicans they will repeatedly say Benghazi again. You know that 2012 incident where the American ambassador to Libya Christopher Stevens and three other Americans were killed, and the republicans falsely will say that was because of Hillary Clinton and Susan Rice who became, like you know, the hate figures and so on. Let's talk about a couple of key cases. One is with Turkey that you have got a difficult case here again, which is, we know Joe Biden is on the record that he is not a fan of President Erdogan and he has made some comments that have been far from polite about President Erdogan. President Erdogan also made some comments that have been far from polite about Joe Biden.

However, Turkey's in a very tricky position right now both domestically and in terms of the region and that is the Erdogan government trying to deal with a lot of opposition within the country and has often been very fierce in putting down that opposition how far they can do that. You think of that secondly in the region they are gambling on being the dominant influence in the Middle East and North Africa. They are gambling on that with Syria,

they are gambling on that with Libya, but it is not just a question of facing the Assad regime or facing the dividing groups in Libya. They are facing off against the also Saudis; they are facing off against the UAE. They have to manoeuvre with the Russians who also want an increased presence in the Middle East. The Middle East is like this kaleidoscope of moving parts and what that means is that on the one hand I do not think everyone is going to give Joe Biden a big hug immediately, but on the other hand Erdogan was not going to burn his bridges with Washington. He will continue to say things such as the Gulenist I do not want another coup like in 2016, and he will expect the Americans to respect that.

However, on the other hand, he will not, for example, pull Turkey out of NATO and he will not close down the American military base. It will be a question again of establishing the rules of the game between the US and Turkey. Next door in Syria is the one that I am watching because of eaworldview, this site I run; we have covered Syria almost every day since the uprising of March 2011. Part of Biden's baggage and those who will be in this administration is, in my opinion, this, which is their big failure from the Obama administration in that they let Syrian civilians down. When the US did not stand up to the Assad regime and did not stand up to Russia in 2013 over the chemical attacks, and when they did not stand up even before that over conventional attacks by having a protected zone for civilians, they lost the initiative in Syria, and the powers that are important in Syria right now is fine. The Americans are alongside the Kurds in northeast Syria, where there is a lot of oil; we know that. However, for the rest of Syria, if it is the Assad regime areas, Russia is the key power alongside Iran and the key power in northwest Syria.

Question: *So, actually I was going to talk about Turkey and the bilateral relationship and how the bilateral relations will be evolved after the Biden administration because there were many incidents even during the Trump administrations like you mentioned some. Especially in S-400 aerial defence system, a claim for breaching to embargo on Iran by one Turkish national bank Halk Bank case and do Syrian crisis and so on. Also, like even trump was mentioning about destroying the Turkish economy because of the Pastor Branson case and on the other hand during the pre-election campaign Biden's assessment about Turkey was also considered some kind of like a hint for the future relationship of Turkey. In August, he mentioned Turkey, and he was not that favourite to the Erdogan. Nevertheless, considering all of this, what we may witness about the relationship during the Biden administration does Biden stick to what he said before the election or does his attitude change after the election?*

Scott Lucas: I think the greatest tip to what Joe Biden's advisors do is look at what they did during the Obama administration.

Question: *I think Biden administration is no better than Trump administration about Turkey. They knew Turkey very well I mean some of the two people in Biden's administration.*

Scott Lucas: Let start with this from the Turkish standpoint they are going to balance between or manoeuvre between multiple Powers. They will balance between the Americans, the EU, Russia, and between powers in the region, including the Gulf States, which is the first step for a Biden administration. I think you get beyond the rhetoric of Joe Biden. Will they recognize that? Furthermore, I think they will. I think the idea of just sending out a threat to Erdogan and say you must not take S-400s from Russia right or you must not do this. That is not the way you deal with Erdogan. You do not try to threaten Erdogan. The question is what you can offer Erdogan or what is positive on the way forward, which means he does not swing away from you further.

I mean, to be honest with you, one of the cases that was resolved was the Pastor Brunson case under the Trump administration, but it was resolved because people behind the scenes finally got smart about this and said look, we do not want the case of this pastor to completely tear apart US-Turkish relations because there were these silly threats that were going back and forth for which we will destroy your economy. For example, if you look at what a Biden administration will do, they will recognize that Turkey is a member of NATO and it makes no sense to destabilize that relationship. Now, if Turkey, for example, gets too close to Russia in terms of taking not just S-400s but other military supplies from there though the reminder will go out to Turkey which is that your defence systems are primarily built on equipment which you take from Europe do you really want to go down the route of going towards Moscow that far.

If Turkey goes too far economically in terms of saying well, we will just simply swing towards Russia. We will swing towards other alternatives there will probably be the polite reminder when Turkey's under severe economic pressure, the Russian economy is not that strong and the possibility of links with China. Well, that is going to take some time if you want to put your chips there is this really the way you want to go right, I think they will be the polite reminder of over Libya for example which is look all of us are in a tricky position in Libya because we are now nine years after the fall of Ghaddafi and we still have a very unstable situation what can be a very damaging situation. Do you really want to further that or do we want to find some way of trying to pull back from the conflict between the militias and how we do not like what the Russians are doing in Libya either and we know you do not? So, that in other words on each of these you look for a pragmatic line with Turkey recognizing what is in the interest of Erdogan well he wants to maintain power. He wants to be seen as an international actor, but he also wants to make sure the Turkish economy does not fall apart. So, take the question of Iran the reason why the Turkish you know you had a Turkish national and Halk Bank being prosecuted over Iran was they broke the rules of the game were you might not like the

sanctions on Iran you might not like that, but they are there, and you do not go around, and this was a fairly severe claim that was being made.

So, I think Biden administration goes to Turkey and says “look we want to do something about these American sanctions on Iran we think they have been too excessive they have been damaging give us time but at the same time do not break the sanctions do not mess around with this” because it just embarrasses everybody. At the end of the day, part of me says there are some very serious issues in terms of rights both within the US and Turkey that we could talk about. There are some severe issues about how the US and Turkey have conducted themselves in the past, but the starting point at a very pragmatic level will be this idea of can we get back to negotiating with each other and realize the rules of the game are on this. I think Joe Biden can sometimes be a little bit over the top with his public rhetoric, but as a private, in private negotiating he is a pragmatist, and he will not want to get into a fistfight with the Erdogan even though he might want it because he is tough.

Question: *What I understand is that the Biden administration will strengthen the institutionalized relationship between Turkey and the United States and they will use this NATO and maybe they will strengthen the Turkish-EU partnership. There is kind of like a sign in Turkey after the Biden administration was elected there were changes in the economic management and some other steps saying that we see ourselves in the West. Can these be read as a softening policy or literal relationship between Turkey and the United States?*

Scott Lucas: Let me just add your point because I think you have answered it better than I can. It is not just between the US and Turkey but between the US and a number of other countries in the UK, the EU, and Japan. It is the institutions and the agencies that are the bedrock of the relationship. Presidents come and go, maybe President Erdogan will be gone someday I do not know he might be there 30 years from now, but presidents come and go. The lasting power is, do your militaries get along together, do your intelligence services get along together, do your economic agencies get along together, do you have faith in that relationship and the more that you work on that day-to-day relationship between institutions away from the headlines the better the relationships going to be. There is actually a paradox here because we speak in the UK, whereas I actually think the US-Turkish relationship will have those institutional links that will develop. Although, you know the apparent conflict at the top the real problem here in the UK is that this is where the institutional relationships are being broken in the sense because the UK is coming out of Europe, the Brexit which is the worst thing for the UK military for the UK economic institutions for the UK intelligence services because they are isolating themselves. Institutionally neither Turkey nor the US want to isolate. They want to work in broader relationships broader if not necessarily alliances at

least groups you work with. That is probably the key feature of the US-Turkish relationship both within NATO and then with relationships between the US and Turkey and the EU.

Question: *Actually, I mean there seemed to be a consideration that the Biden administration will be dealing with Turkey in terms of its human rights and democracy. This kind of like things will be raised after the Biden administrations, and Turkey needs to work on this kind of like dimensions rather than other situations like in Syria or other foreign affairs. I mean like entirely focusing on Turkish internal policy would be highlighted by the Biden administrations.*

Scott Lucas: No, I do not see the Biden administration not just on Turkey but on a general approach going back to a human rights approach. I mean the Obama administration actually talked about human rights but did not necessarily follow up but let me give you examples beyond Turkey and then we will get back to that. The time to go, the time to really pin down Muhammad Bin Salman was after the killing of Jamal Khashoggi at the end of 2018 because you had allies such as indeed President Erdogan who are willing to put pressure on the Saudis that time has come and gone. There may be some in the US congress that want to continue to punish the Saudis do not think it will happen. You will not see the Biden administration putting a great deal of pressure on China over the Xinjiang question the Uyghur Muslims in the northwest. They may raise the issue of Hong Kong, but that is for very special reasons. For example, Hong Kong is visible, and it is also a financial hub, but generally, they will not be going in with China on human rights issues.

They probably will raise human rights issues with the Russians, but that is a way of putting pressure on them. As long as Turkey is felt like all right, we are getting back to this institutionalized relationship they want. They will not go after questions, for example, such as the detention of journalists. There is no mileage in that they will not go back to the protest of 2013 and seven years later come back and say let's have a look at this let's reopen that case. They are not going to do it with Turkey; they will not do it with Egypt with President Sisi even though we still have serious questions about human rights there because the Biden administration's priority will be that it has to repair a lot of damage to where America stood in various conflicts and various issues in the Middle East, in North Africa, in Asia. Suppose you are repairing relationships in those conflicts. In that case, you cannot go in at the same time and start wagging your finger at various states over human rights and domestic situations as much as I believe in human rights and as much as I hope you raise those questions you know as a pragmatist, it will not happen because there are more immediate issues that existed before Trump but that have been made worse because of what Trump has done.

Question: *Okay, I understand. I think it actually was my last question because I wondered whether the Biden administration would follow the Obama's path as some people saying that this is going to be like a clause it relates to Obama's administration or his style. I think as soon as I understand Biden administration will locate itself in between Obama and Trump. Is it possible to expect some kind of like a normative behaviour and some kind of like a real politics and pragmatic manner?*

Scott Lucas: I think that is a good assessment that Biden may in a sense be slightly between Obama and Trump. You will not see the grand speeches such as Obama's Cairo Speech or indeed Obama's Ankara Speech of 2009. You are going to see more the type of behaviour that occurred in the second term of the Obama administration think about the Iran nuclear deal, think about the attempt even as I think it was badly handling its Syria policy to reach an accommodation with Russia over what should be done in the Middle East, think about its so-called Asia Pivot that said the reason why you cannot just simply say it is another Obama administration. It is because circumstances have changed and they have changed in two ways the first is if you talk about the Middle East we are now nine years after the so-called Arab spring and situations have not been resolved there. I mean we have gone through the phase of the Islamic State, but they are still present in Iraq which is still in a state of mass protest serious questions about its government's legitimacy. We are still in the middle of the Yemen civil war that's taken place we still have not had a resolution of Libya as we talked about you and me earlier, we are talking about an EU.

I think the EU itself is in a strong footing, but I think the UK is in a seriously diminished situation because of Brexit we are talking about the issue of North Korea has not been resolved in Asia and indeed North Korea has been able to continue its nuclear program while having the photo opportunities with Trump. China is now four years down the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) further and then affects Africa or China, you know we could go on and on. In other words, politics never stand still, and we are four years away from where the Obama administration stopped as well as being in a pandemic, I remind you again and again. So, what do you do in that type of situation again I think we talked about it on the domestic front, but I think it is also true here you show that you have adults in the room, and you take steps which are for the immediate repair. So, for example, you go back into the World Health Organization, you go back into it because it is a responsible thing to do in a pandemic, but you also do it politically because if you stay outside the World Health Organization who is the number one power that benefits by increasing its contribution? It is China.

You go back, and you rethink your relationship with the EU, not just NATO. However, with the EU in terms of economic cooperation, because if you do that who are you looking at well, you are looking at the Chinese alternative, you look at relations with Turkey very pragmatically because that affects your relationship both with NATO and with the Middle East and Middle Eastern Powers. However, also it affects your relationship with Europe. I mean Turkey's got that key position. So, Biden, I think from a pragmatic

viewpoint, the problem that will come in is the one that the Obama administration faced when you have a serious crisis that unsettles your day-to-day institutional planning you respond. If you have another version of what happened in 2011 like the Arab Spring what you do if you have another intifada in Palestine or if you have a situation where you have a war between Israel and Hamas and Gaza what do. You know you, and I could run all these scenarios that administrations cannot plan for them. However, you cannot map out your action before they occur right and that is where the challenge comes in I guess what I am saying to you is I have mixed feelings about where Joe Biden comes from and have a mixed feeling where the advisors come from because I think they badly mishandled certain situations in the Obama administration.

However, I know whom I was dealing with, and at least the world knew whom I was dealing with. Trump, it was not just the question of that your house might leak into the roof he was going to go in and tear the whole roof down, and that is the problem and then let me leave you with this as much as we talk about Joe Biden as much as we talk about this. Here is what I am looking at beyond it the one person who was not in the Obama administration who is significant in the Biden administration is Kamala Harris. We know Kamala Harris in terms of where she stands on a lot of domestic issues because she has been a senator for a few years from California because her track record was in domestic politics before she went into the senate coming out of California if there is a Kamala Harris administration in 2024. If Biden's one-term president does she have a different vision of America in the World or does she just simply fit into this, you know this sort of blueprint that we talked about we do not know, and that is sort of I think a very exciting prospect because I think she is an exciting person in terms of her competence her ability what she means as potentially the first Black American President the first Asian American President. So, I guess what I the present is always tricky the present is always one where we might stumble, but at least we have got a path which means that we can start to work together not just with the officials, but at all levels of society and across countries we have got a path that has not been there in the past four years. Let see if we can take it.

Question: *I understand what you mean. The timing and the circumstances will shape how this Biden administration will look like and also it is more predictable to what Biden is going to do than assuming what Trump can do. Also, actually, I was wondering the last thing. It was about Kamala Harris. There was a belief that Biden himself focused on more internal politics and left the foreign policy to the Kamala Harris. Do you agree with that? Because there is kind of rumour that preparing, she sees herself a candidate for 2024.*

Scott Lucas: I do not think that is right to be that type of division. I think again without pouring everything back into the way that it was done the

Obama Administration. I do think it is instructive the way that Obama and Biden work together. Obama's quote, which was Biden, was the last person in the room. He would take Biden's advice in the sense that he would run ideas pass Biden and review Biden's situation. I think you see the same thing with Kamala Harris. I know that politically we can remember that first democratic debate where she nearly ended his candidacy by going after him about racial matters almost embarrassed him. However, at the end of the day, they are both pragmatic politicians; there is not a modern versus the last thing, it is not a reactionary versus progressive thing. They both are pretty much politicians which is what can we get done.

So, I think you will see her brought in immediately on coronavirus she will be a key part of the response there, and she will be very much a part of what the administration does on immigration for obvious reasons. She is the child of immigrants there is that personal connection this here. I think you will see her probably involved in other domestic issues racial and social issues that involved. I am not sure where exactly she will fit in internationally. However, I think again it is probably the case when they see you are pressing issue, but they have to deal with whether it is China, whether it is Russia. That shown to be one of the voices in the room. You can say the thing you can say about the Trump Administration is that Mike Pence, the vice president, was competent. Quite often, Trump did not listen to him at least Pence could hold him back on occasion. I think here, Kamala Harris is competent, and she works with the president as competent as well. Does it mean that we are going to solve all the global problems? No, it does not, but it means that I think that the American response would be something which would be much more predictable and much more responsible than what we have seen in the past.

Question: *As far as I understand, Kamala Harris is a competent enough to conduct many things, especially in terms of internally, especially focusing on some migration issues or other domestic issues rather than foreign policy. Because she is competent, energetic, and ambitious, maybe it makes her unique. What would you say about her active involvement as a Vice President to the American Policy?*

Scott Lucas: I think so, but another thing is probably she would be the first vice president to become president if she succeeded since George H.W. Bush (the big Bush) in 1989 and I think they are the way that you saw Bush already had for the expertise he was ambassador to China he was in ambassador to the United Nations, he was CIA director. Harris does not have those credentials, so I think you will see her trying to actually try to be involved in foreign policy issues to build expertise. Thus, the difference I think between her and say someone like a big Bush in the past and it will take time, even as smart as she is, will take time to get in on these issues. So, I think we will see it not in terms of that she will have a dramatic foreign

policy mission within the first year of the presidency, but she will become part of the team discussing these issues.

Question: *Okay, thank you so much, Prof. Scott Lucas, for sharing your thoughts with us. I really appreciate what you have said to us. Actually, you covered many issues, and you answered many questions and briefly. It was enlightening us. Thank you so much again.*

Scott Lucas

Thank you.

*** This interview was transcribed by Berkay Karlıdağ (Student at Eskişehir Osmangazi University, Turkey)*

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