

**TIP CONFERENCE WITH  
THE ISRAEL PROJECT  
ON MONDAY DECEMBER 15, 2008  
AT 12:00 P.M. CENTRAL TIME**

**OPERATOR:** -- This is the TIP Conference on December 15, 2008 starting at 12:00 o'clock p.m. Central Time with The Israel Project.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Hello, and thank you for joining us. This is Jennifer Laszlo-Mizrahi, Founder and President of The Israel Project. And we're so delighted to have Ambassador John Bolton, a Senior Fellow at the American Enterprise Institute with us today. As I said he's currently at AEI, but I think most of us know him as the champion of democracy and freedom from the United Nations where he served as United States Permanent Representative to the United Nations from August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2005 until December of 2006; and from June of 2001 to May of 2005. He served as Under-Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security. And he's previously worked in other government agencies in very, very senior positions.

Ambassador Bolton, we are in awe of your good work on the Iran issue and so many other things, and we want to thank you so much for being with us today. We have approximately 300 people from around the world on the call with us here today. And people have emailed in questions for you, which I will read to you after you've made an opening statement. But Ambassador, thanks for joining us today.

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well thanks, Jennifer, very much. Thank you for your very kind introduction. And I thought what I might do is just spend a couple of minutes on what we all know colloquially as Durban 2; and then I'd be happy to try and respond to any questions that people may have.

This conference is called Durban 2 because it follows from the conference held in Durban, South Africa in 2001, one of these worldwide international conferences sponsored by the United Nations that had become quite a fashion in the 1990s. And like all conferences of this sort, people come together at either the head-of-state-level or the foreign-minister level. And to justify why they are spending all this money to go so far away from home, they always come up with a declaration. And, you know, nominally the subject of Durban 1 and Durban 2. For that matter, the subject of racism is a very important issue. It's important on a global basis, important to us as Americans for obvious reasons.

But what happened at Durban in the initial conference was that it was really very little about racism and mostly about Israel and efforts by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its supporters in other Third World countries to paint Israel into a corner as basically the only, or at least the most racist country in the world.

Now, the reason behind all of this activity actually goes back a little bit further. And much of the thinking that went into all this started in the early 1990s, after the repeal in 1991 of the General Assembly Resolution declaring Zionism was a form of racism; originally passed in 1975.

I think people were—in many parts of the world—were surprised in 1991 when the United States was able to lead a worldwide effort to repeal the Zionism is Racism Resolution. Surprised in many respects. Many people thought UN General Assembly Resolutions couldn't be repealed at all. And they certainly didn't think that we would be able to break the Third World consensus that had held together on Zionism is Racism from the time of the Resolution's adoption.

Now the theory behind the original 1975 Resolution, and much of the theory behind the antipathy toward Israel reflected in Durban 1 is not simply for rhetorical purposes. It has a fundamental political purpose to de-legitimize the State of Israel. In 1975 when Zionism

was declared to be a form of racism, that put Israel in the unhappy company of South Africa as the only country in the world to be condemned as a—to have its very system condemned as a fundamentally racist system.

And what was at work in the effort in the '60s and '70s to de-legitimize South Africa was obviously to overturn the apartheid government and get a different form of government installed. And, you know, I'm sure everybody on this call supported the efforts of democracy in South Africa, and the end of the apartheid regime was nothing to lose any sleep over.

But the fact was the Anti-Israel forces in the UN System took this model and applied the logic to Israel. The theory being that if you could de-legitimize the Government in Israel, obviously you've laid the basis, ultimately for the elimination of the State and the creation of an alternative state, presumably Palestine.

This was certainly the theory of the PLO. And I'm sure everybody is familiar with the fact that the PLO map of what it thinks the State of Palestine is has never included a State of Israel.

So the notion of labeling Israel as a racist state—going back to the Zionism is Racism Resolution—was a political foundation for a larger geo-strategic objective. And therefore when the Zionism is Racism Resolution was repealed in 1991 people had to find another vehicle. Another approach to achieve that same objective to de-legitimize Israel and to create, as they've tried to do for so many years, facts on the ground in the Middle East. Not through legitimate negotiations with the Government of Israel. But through lights and mirrors and shadows and smoke in the UN System.

So that the Durban Declaration from 2001, in effect, was a way of getting back to Zionism is Racism without doing it in the General Assembly in New York, where the proponents figured that maybe the United States would pay attention. And be able to block it as we were able to repeal the Zionism is Racism Resolution.

So in 2001 the still relatively new Bush Administration had to make a decision what to do, as it became ever more apparent that Durban 2 would contain language that was fundamentally wrong and offensive. And the Administration decided—not without a lot of internal debate—but the Administration decided to walk out of Durban and not simply, not join consensus or vote against this terrible piece of paper. But in our own way to try and de-legitimize the outcome by not having the United States participate at all.

But as in so many things in the UN System on issue after issue, the people who believe that they can change reality by passing resolutions in the UN or an international conference didn't give up. And so like all, almost all UN events, part of the final declaration was to call a Review Conference some years down the road and this is the conference that will begin in late April of this year in Geneva.

And the purpose—I think the timing, not accidentally, to be sure it was well past the end of the Bush Administration—to give the proponents of the initial Durban 1 Declaration a chance to reinforce it, to add to it, to strengthen it, as a continuing part of their long-range campaign to de-legitimize Israel.

So the State of Play that we face at the moment is that obviously Israel has said it's not even going to participate in the Geneva Conference. Canada, to its credit, has said the same thing. Others have said, Europeans in particular, that they hope the conference won't turn out the way Durban 1 did. But they're still participating in all the preparatory activities.

And I'm sure, as many of you know, in the UN System the preparatory activities are things that go on literally for years before the actual conference. And it's a whole series of activities. Not just governments meeting to negotiate about the terms of the final declaration that the conference will adopt. But endless NGO meetings and seminars and conferences, all designed to build up to the conclusion at the meeting in Geneva in April.

Now during the end of the Bush Administration, the decision was made not to participate in the preparatory work for the Durban Review Conference. But Secretary Rice was unwilling to make a decision to say, definitively, that the United States would not participate in Durban 2 when it convened in April. And her argument was because obviously by April, the Bush Administration would no longer be in Office and couldn't determine what the next Administration will do.

So we are now in a period in the transition between the Bush and Obama Administrations, where people are considering—in the incoming Administration—are considering what to do and how to approach what will be, I think, one of the very first foreign policy challenges that the new Administration faces.

My own view, not likely to carry great weight in the new Administration, but my own view is that this could be a very important early signal to say that the United States will not accept this kind of process or this kind of outcome. That we're not going to be involved in these extravaganzas that have pre-cooked outcomes that we know are going to be unacceptable. And that the United States won't attend as we have not offered candidates for the new UN Human Rights Council, which was created about two-and-a-half years ago. A Body designed to replace the thoroughly discredited UN Human Rights Commission. But which has turned out to be as bad or worse than the Body that it replaced—that being the opinion of no less than the Editorial pages of the New York Times and the Washington Post.

But that's why this conference is going to be a critical decision point, I think, for the new Administration. Because those who believe that we should participate in the Human Rights Council; who believe that it's always better to be present at a meeting like this rather than to reject it at the outset, are going to make a very substantial effort—already are making a very substantial effort—for the new Administration to participate.

And here is how I think it lines up. This is really the critical decision that the new Administration will have to make. On the one hand the argument, which I certainly favor is we should announce very early and very clearly that the United States won't participate, on the one hand. Versus the argument that many others are making. That it's important to distinguish the Obama Administration from the Bush Administration. And to say we're going to try and engage with the Europeans and others around the world.

The Europeans have issued statements, as I say, that they hope the outcome of this conference will be acceptable—but they are prepared to negotiate. And the U.S. should engage with the Europeans and go to Geneva and see if we can't make this event into an outcome that will be acceptable for the United States.

I think that's a mistake for a number of reasons. I've dealt with the Europeans for a long time. I know how they will react. They will make tough statements in December and January and February and March, and when they get to Geneva in April they will compromise. And we will have a slightly less objectionable statement that will just make it harder for the United States to reject.

Now, you know, in response to those who say that we should show that we're pursuing engagement; that we're not acting unilaterally; that we're not acting, in short, with disdain for the outcome of this conference. All I can say is Canada, which is one of the most countries, which pursues one of the most multilateral foreign policies in the entire world. One of the strongest supporters of the UN System has already said it's not going to go.

And other countries around the world are waiting for a display of American leadership. If we act like leaders and state our position early, it's possible we can rally some of the Europeans and others around us. But once we put our foot on the slippery slope toward Geneva we will find ourselves there. And I think we're only delaying the inevitable

outcome that at some point in that weeklong event in Geneva, the new Administration will have to decide to walk out again. Just as Secretary Powell decided to walk out of Durban 1 back in 2001.

So really, I think the issue for you to discuss and decide how you want to come out is whether to make this statement sooner rather than later. My view is you make it sooner you have more of an effect and more of an impact on the outcome. If you don't, you're going to get the same outcome. It's just going to be a lot more painful down the road.

So why don't I stop there. And as I said, I think this is going to be a very important event. A very important decision point for the new Administration and I hope they come out the right way.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** I appreciate that. The first question is from the UN Bureau Chief of the Washington Times, who asked:

The UN Secretariat says that by holding the conference on UN property they will be able to limit access to accredited NGOs and similarly vetted "professional organizations". The Secretariat also says they have almost nothing to do with this. I suspect you disagree. Please expand.

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well, you know, in the UN Compound in Geneva, it's a very open environment, and almost anybody can be accredited to be an NGO. So, and almost anybody can be accredited as a Member of the Press as well. So I think you're going to see quite a collection of people assembled there. And, you know, all of this is being conducted in UN facilities that imposes costs that—we're bearing a share of this simply through our payment of the Regular UN Assessment no matter what anybody says. And I don't doubt that the UN Secretariat, Ban Ki-moon who's empathetic to the United

States, wants to stay as far away from this as possible. But that doesn't disguise whose auspices this is being held under.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** The NGO Monitor asked:

What do you think would be of an impact of an NGO Forum on the outcome of Durban 2 Conference?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** I think you would see a split among the NGOs. Some obviously responsibly holding that the direction this thing is taking is very unacceptable. But others, including a lot of front groups that are set up to pretend to be NGOs, will use it as an excuse to attack Israel and the United States.

You know the pattern in the old Human Rights Commission was that most of the resolutions that were adopted were critical of Israel. The U.S. came in second for being criticized. But the real human rights violators escaped. They actually used the Commission and they're using the new Council to protect themselves against international criticism for their human rights record. And I think that's exactly what's going to happen in this conference in Geneva too.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Robert Guttman asked:

The new Israel Fund claims to oppose Durban 2 process but is providing over a half-million dollars to Adalla, which is heavily supporting the conference. Do you see the new Israel Fund is creating a problem for Israel through this funding? Do you know if they're also contributing to the Ford Foundation, money and others to this conference? Who are the funders of this conference? And for example, are American tax dollars used in this conference?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I'm not—I'd have to say I'm not, myself, personally familiar with where all the funding is coming from. I think that that's certainly something worth exploring. And it would be surprising to me that anybody who's a supporter of Israel would want to be—would want to be participating in funding because the outcome of this thing is really going to be very unhappy under any circumstances.

As I mentioned, there is certainly indirect UN funding for this because much of the conference activity is being held in UN facilities around the world; and that's been true ever since Durban 1. And there's an implicit U.S. contribution there even if we're not—even if it turns out we don't send a delegation.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** An Independent Journalist asked:

Last week you and General Assembly President referred to Israel as an Apartheid State, and so has Bennis, a Senior Analyst at the Institute for Policy Studies, remarked that this statement was: "Received by extraordinary enthusiasm by the General Assembly."

She also recommended that one of the first steps that the Obama Administration would take would be to withhold military aid to Israel until all the settlements are dismantled.

Would you comment on your reaction to this General Assembly President's remarks, and to Miss Bennis' recommendation?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** This brings back a lot of recollections of my time in New York at the UN. This particular General Assembly President, Mr. Brockman from Nicaragua, is a Sandinista. He's a long time left wing Anti-American, Anti-Semitic. He has really demonstrated during his tenure as President of the General Assembly, how some people have never gotten out of their radical phase in the 1970s. And it's kind of like—if you

brought him across First Avenue into Manhattan—it would be kind of like a slideshow of flying amber.

Unfortunately, in the General Assembly in New York it's just, you know, business as usual. And I don't doubt that that kind of remark, which is unfortunately typical of many he's made, was greeted enthusiastically in the General Assembly. That's business as usual too.

And you can see the kind of mindset that's at work here that I think will be displayed in plain view at the Durban 2 Conference in Geneva. This is a—there's a real momentum built up to get ready for this conference. And they expect that the outcome will have an impact in subsequent efforts at negotiations in the Middle East peace process.

That's part of what goes on in these efforts to use the UN System to create facts on the ground in the Middle East to confront Israel with a new kind of political reality. So once this conference adopts whatever the rhetoric turns out to be in the declaration that will then be cited over and over again as showing why Israel has to make further concession in the peace process. Why the Arab-Israeli issue has to be resolved before anything else in the Middle East. Like Iran's support for terrorism or its nuclear weapons program or any of dozens of other issues. And it's why the U.S. presence at this meeting will simply legitimize whatever the outcome is.

The best—let me just say from one experience in negotiation—the best you're going to get in a final conference document is language that's merely extremely offensive. And why we would ever want to agree to that, or why we would want to negotiate language that allows our friends in Europe to sign on to it, even if we don't, I just don't understand.

That's why I think the cleanest most effective strongest way for the U.S. to behave is to simply not to participate. Not to attend this thing; and to announce right away that we're not going to participate.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Laura Greene asked:

Is there really a point in Israel remaining in the UN?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I think that, I mean my own experience on behalf of the United States is a lot of what you do at the UN is damage control. And that's not a very pleasant task. But the fact is that many of our friends, many of our friends in Europe regard the UN as something that is important in their foreign policy.

Just as one example. Many of the nations that remain with us in Iraq today, do so in part because the Security Council has authorized that international coalition to be there in a Security Council Resolution. Countries like Denmark, Japan, many of the Eastern European countries are able to use that fact in their own domestic political debate. So there are cases where we do benefit from this.

And there are examples as well in the specialized agencies of the UN, that do important and legitimate humanitarian work, and that Israel has participated in them and I think benefited from it. Having said that, I'd just remind everyone of Jean Kirkpatrick's famous line when she was once asked if the U. S. should get out of the U.N. and she said, "No, it's more trouble than it's worth."

So it's, you know, what we need are alternatives to the UN for international problem solving. But I don't think withdrawal at this point, either for Israel or for the U.S. is the right way to go.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Actually, I will ask you to expand on that last comment that you just made, which is, "We need alternatives to the UN for multilateralism." Can you comment? Because Obama has said so many times that he's looking forward to multilateralism. What kinds of multilateral movements you would see as productive on

issues such as Durban or Iran? Or even dealing with the fact that Hezbollah has re-armed and these other things?

What sort of structures are there that are available outside of the UN?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well you know one of the reasons why I think the debate about unilateralism versus multilateralism is so incoherent is that the very concept of multilateralism is itself completely vague. It basically means anything that's not unilateralism. And unilateralism, typically, would mean the U.S. or some other country acting alone.

Multilateralism means everything else. Well, everything else can mean everything from the United Nations itself to NATO, which is the multilateral defense alliance; to the proliferation security initiative, which is a group of over 80 countries that works to try and prevent international trafficking in weapons and materials of mass destruction.

Now, proliferation security initiative is about as different from the UN as you can imagine. We like to say that PSI was an activity, not an organization. As opposed to the UN, which many would say is an organization, not an activity. We're NATO, which is a coherent defense alliance.

So multilateralism can take a lot of different forms. And it doesn't necessarily mean that everything looks like the UN with 192 Member Nations in a rigid structure and a Secretariat and all the rest of it.

I think there are unquestionably, any number of very important issues for the U.S. - the war against terrorism, the struggle against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, narcotics trafficking and many others - where the U.S. can't solve the problem alone. There's no doubt about that.

But that doesn't mean that you go from that perception, that we can't solve the problem alone, to saying, "Everything should be run through the UN." Or, "International conferences of the sort represented by Durban 2." There are many alternative structures, many alternative approaches. And I think that's all to the good.

I think competition in the marketplace for solving international problems is a good thing. And, in fact, the more competition that you have for the UN in many areas, the better the UN has to perform or else it will, in effect, lose business to these alternatives.

So this is not a choice, on the one hand, attending Durban 2. We're not attending Durban 2. Of unilateralism versus multilateralism. It's really, I think, a question of sense and sensibility whether we allow the U.S. to have its name associated with an activity where we know the outcome is going to be detrimental to a close friend and ally of ours. Which let's face it, in many respects is being used as a surrogate target for the United States.

It's very convenient and easy to beat up on Israel. And many of the criticisms that are levied against Israel are thinly veiled criticisms of the United States. It's just a little bit more difficult to go after us. So looking for an easier victim, in many respects Israel is an appealing target.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** There are many questions in the questions that we got asking you to sum up the Obama foreign policy team and objectives. And I don't like to be part of a rock-throwing crowd, so I'm not looking for any rock throwing. What good can you say about the Obama foreign policy crowd? Where are the bright lights or the interesting policies that you think have some positive potential amongst his team and his policies?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I think it's very hard to say at this point what exactly his foreign policy is going to be. And I don't want to descend into partisan criticism. But I

would have to say if you look at the range of things that he said during the campaign, he's got a lot of bases covered on everything from his policy in Iraq to a range of other issues.

I also don't think it is possible to draw firm conclusions from the limited number of nominations to high-level jobs that have been announced. I can tell you from my own experience in the last three Republican Administrations, that names that sound absolutely great during the transition, as in the National Security area in particular, is bringing indication of a strong, unified and coherent National Security Team, don't necessarily play out that way once you actually get into an Administration. Nor have we seen the announcement of the very, very important Sub-Cabinet positions. People who help shape and determine the nature of the debate and the options that the top-level people and the President themselves will be presented with.

So I have actually tried to stay away from the prediction business based on what we know so far about President-elect Obama and the Transition Team. I think it's more important to focus on the issues themselves. Now having said that, I'll contradict myself to this extent.

I think that Senator Clinton, when she becomes Secretary of State, is going to see this issue, Durban 2, on the center of her desk almost from the day she arrives. She's basically only got a couple of months to figure out what the U.S. position is going to be and to defend it. So even though she'll have many other challenges, this is obviously going to be something that she needs to focus on very quickly. And there will be a lot of elements within the new Administration pushing her to attend this conference, or pushing the United States to attend.

Number one, the career bureaucracy at the State Department will see this as very, very important to help justify their existence in effect. I mentioned we had a debate back at the time of Durban 1 in 2001 whether the U.S. should withdraw from the conference. And

the permanent bureaucracy at the State Department; especially the human rights people, were adamant that we should stay. And Secretary Powell ultimately overruled them because he saw that there was no way we were going to get acceptable language.

But that mentality, that you always stay to the last minute, that you never withdraw, that you—ultimately you bow to the consensus of all the other countries, is a very strong cultural phenomenon at the State Department. And that point of view will be given to Senator Clinton just as soon as she arrives.

Second, I think there're going to be a lot of people in the Administration who want to show that they're different from the Bush Administration. And that they are prepared to engage in multilateral activity, and this is going to be their first example of that distinction. I think they're going to want to make that point to the European.

And then third, there'll be a group of people who think they're just better negotiators than previous incumbents in their jobs; and that they can ride to the rescue and fix Durban 2 and actually turn it into a success. I think that view is just naïve, to be straightforward about it. But I don't underestimate the extent to which it will be presented to Secretary Clinton.

So I think it's very important now in the run-up to the 20<sup>th</sup> of January, and certainly after she'll become Secretary Clinton, that people focus on her. She will be the critical person in recommending a decision to Senator Obama. And I think, you know, she is the person that most needs to be influenced between now and that point. And if you want to—if you're able to work on this between now and the time she goes to the State Department, I think this is a very critical period.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Ambassador that was very interesting points on all counts. How do you think the financial crisis impacts the levels of Anti-Zionism or Anti-Semitism at

the UN? Do you see any nexus between the financial crisis and the levels of Anti-Zionism and Anti-Semitism?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I think the likely response of many developing countries at the UN as the global economy goes into a recession, or proceeds through a recession, is that they will simply increase their demands for foreign aid, foreign assistance, economic and otherwise. And, you know, that in part depends on making us and the Europeans feel more guilty. And there are a lot of ways that they can drum up political support for doing that.

And I think that part of this is using the argument—which I think is entirely salacious, but I know that it has appeal in some European circles—of blaming the West for the poverty of Palestinians and other Arabs, in part, because of the existence of Israel.

Now, I've never understood the logic of that. I don't think there is any logic. I think it's factually incorrect. But never underestimate the ability of some people's guilt feelings to get the better of them. And I think that's how the two—what I think are widely disparate questions—but I think how the two could be worked together to the disadvantage of Israel.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Ron Kensias (sp?) of JTA asks:

Is a nuclear Iran inevitable? And if so, how do we handle it?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I think, unfortunately, it's pretty close to inevitable. I mean I've spent a good part of the past eight years trying to convince people that we had to do more than engage in endless, fruitless diplomatic negotiations with Iran. But what we've done—and this is the policy of the Bush Administration that has come to this point, unfortunately—is that we've had over five years of negotiations with Iran, lead by the

Europeans, during which the Europeans have proposed incentive after incentive for the Iranians to give up their nearly 20-yearlong pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. And they have told the Iranians, repeatedly, that if Iran would do that it could have a completely different relationship, not just with Europe, but with the United States as well.

Throughout this entire diplomatic effort, everybody has known—everybody has known, and particularly Iran, that the Europeans were speaking on behalf of the United States. And if that wasn't clear to people, Secretary Rice made it even clearer about two years ago when she said we would sit down with Iran. Even overcoming our normal unwillingness to sit down with a state-sponsored terrorism because we considered the nuclear question so important.

So it's not like diplomacy hasn't been tried. It has been tried for over five years. And I'm afraid it's failed. Iran now has complete indigenous mastery over the nuclear fuel cycle. They can do everything they need to do from uranium in the ground, which they have deposits of, all the way up to enrichment; and ultimately weaponization.

And I think if you simply look at the public data from *The International Atomic Energy Agency*, you'll see they've already got enough well enriched uranium, which if enriched to weapons grade would be enough for one nuclear weapon. And by the end of this year they'll have enough for at least two more.

And that's just based on what we, and the International Atomic Energy Agency know. There isn't any intelligence in what I've just said. It's all publicly available data. If there are other facilities we're not aware of, then the Iranians are even further along.

And I'm afraid that it means the Bush Administration policy—and incidentally (sp?) the President always used to say it was unacceptable for Iran to have nuclear weapons. And I always thought what he meant by that was he wouldn't accept it. But, and that

ultimately if as a last resort it came to it he'd be prepared to use a targeted military force against the Iranian nuclear facilities.

I don't think that's going to happen. I don't know that for a fact. Obviously, if he's still thinking about it he wouldn't be talking about it publicly. But I think the odds in the next month that he will do something are effectively zero.

President-elect Obama has also said he believed that an Iran with nuclear weapons is unacceptable. But his entire campaign was based on the premise that more effective negotiation with Iran could dissuade them from this path they've been on for 20 years. And he hasn't said anything yet to indicate that he sees things differently now than he did during the campaign.

So I'm afraid that absent action by Israel, which may or may not be possible, given the political turmoil that we see in Israel today. Iran is now closer to achieving that objective of a deliverable nuclear weapon than it's ever been. And I think we're in a place where we have very few attractive options, and where Iran is in the driver's seat basically.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** We have a question from Barry Salavant (sp?), which is right along that point:

Which is what is your opinion of the so-called nuclear security shield that has supposedly been proposed?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well this is an argument that if Israel is attacked by Iranian nuclear weapons we will retaliate with nuclear weapons. I think it's pretty thin consolation to Israel, which is a small enough territory, that with two or three nuclear weapons from Iran you've got a nuclear holocaust and no State of Israel. It's pretty thin consolation that we'll retaliate.

I'm not sure that if people think about it they really want to return to the Cold War deterrence theories of mutual assured destruction. We were lucky we got through the Cold War without an exchange of nuclear salvos with the Soviet Union. I'm not eager to put myself or my countrymen or our friends and allies back under that kind of threat.

But even if—even if you were to make the argument that the Cold War wasn't all that bad, you know, you have to ask yourselves whether Iran or other states like North Korea are able of forming the same calculus, the same cost benefit analysis that we and the Soviets did during the Cold War that prevented the exchange of nuclear weapons.

You know, if you live in a theological regime like Iran's, where the afterlife is more highly prized than life on earth, you've got a very different view from what we in the U.S. do anyway, about the advantages of being alive or being in the next life.

So I'm not happy putting faith in deterrence against people whose calculus is deterrence and whose very value system is so different from ours. And where the balance of power seems to put the decided advantage on the first mover to use their nuclear weapons first.

And I might say that this is why I think it's important that when we talk about Iran's efforts to acquire nuclear weapon capability, we don't forget that inherent in the whole concern about proliferation is that if Iran gets nuclear weapons, they will be the—they will not be the last country in the region to do it.

Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, perhaps others, will all conclude that if Iran gets nuclear weapons they need nuclear weapons too. Then you have a scenario of multiple countries with relatively small nuclear arsenals, any one of whom may think, "I'd better strike first before my capability is destroyed." So that the risk of a first use of nuclear weapons rises the more countries have these nuclear weapons under their control.

**JENNIFER LASZLO MIRZAH:** Ambassador, we appreciate your time so very much and we know that it's limited. So I'm going to ask you one final question that's sort of an accumulation of many questions from people who have emailed in.

Which is given that you do care about human rights and security and peace, what do you think are the most important things that the next Administration and the world needs to focus on?

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** Well I think the continuing struggle against terrorism and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is the central concern that we should have and that our friends and allies have. You know these are not fundamentally military weapons in the hands of terrorists and rogue states. They are instruments of terror. They're not military concerns for the U.S. in present circumstances. But they're weapons that can be used to hold innocent civilian populations hostage, and our population, and populations of our friends and allies around the world.

So that's why I think it's wrong when people say that Iran is a small threat. It may be a small threat to the United States, but just as during the Cold War our smaller friends and allies in the world see it as an existential (sp?) threat and they're absolutely right to be concerned about it.

We've got to make it clear that the most important human right is the right of self-preservation; and get away from the scenario that we now see, for example, in the case of Somalia. Which has descended into anarchy; and used as a base by terrorists and pirates when NATO was confronted with the possibility of taking action against these pirates based in Somalia. At least up until now it's decided not to do it because it was afraid of being accused of violating the human rights of the pirates.

You know that kind of mentality freezes the U.S. capability to protect itself and its friends and allies. And all the rhetoric about human rights in the world isn't going to do a lot to comfort us if we can't accomplish the fundamental function for which we establish government in the first place, which is our collective self defense.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** Ambassador, on behalf of The Israel Project Board and Staff, we want to thank you very much for spending this time with us.

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** It is my pleasure, and good luck to you.

**JENNIFER LASZLO-MIZRAHI:** And we wish you well in all of your future activities. And thanks again for being with us today.

**AMBASSADOR JOHN BOLTON:** My pleasure. Thank you.