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So I'm very interested in America's position in the world of shifting powers. Essentially, there's a great, great deal of debate within foreign policy circles about future relationships between states and the states rise up. What will that mean for other states? And the obvious the obvious central point of that, for most commentators is thinking about the rise of China, China, and how that might challenge the United States of America. But actually how global relationships are shifting as well. There's a lot there's a lot of work going on around this. If you look at people like Joseph Nye, for example, Joseph Nye talks about how power is shifting horizontally between states, but also how it's shifting vertically from state down into non state actors. Some of them are multinational corporations, what we might regard as good and some of them are bad for terrorist groups.

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But there's a broader debate that I think actually you see. Throughout recent American history, actually about the position of America in the world, and there are often moments where a sense of decline is a decline ism creeps in to the USA. And so I came at this from a position of being interested in how the Obama administration approach this because I think you can see a number of interesting things going on there. Because Obama inherited an economy that was in dire straits because of the economic collapse. You have the problems, the fighting the war on terror that is bogged down into wars in Iraq and in Afghanistan. And that was kind of leading to a questioning of where America was in the world, I think not just from the international community and from analysts, but from actually the American people themselves for a very influential article written in 1940 by a man called Henry Luce in Time Magazine, where he talks about how the 20th century was going to be amazing. American century that actually became quite an influential piece of writing. And in fact, later on when the Cold War ended, we saw a very influential piece that said, okay, the Cold War is over America is one. And what does this mean for America?

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What this means for America is we're going to see 30 to 40 years of America being the dominant state in the world, that we're going to have this unipolar moment where America can shape the world and its own interests and influence and influence the world. And that very quickly unravels, I think, on 911 and the awful attacks of 911. It unravels because of the economic crash, as I said, it unravels because of the problems in the war on terror. Nicolas, how do you respond to that? Does that mean that America continues having global roles? Does it mean that America retreats from the world does it mean that America is just in a position where its influence is declining? And I think all These things you see being discussed during the Obama presidency. I think they're being discussed now. It's showing the Trump presidency this this sense of where is America's position? I don't think Obama for a minute, felt that America was in decline. I think for him, it was about to know about reprioritizing America that he took a view of the wars overseas with damaging America's credibility. And he wanted to ensure that domestic priorities particularly his own domestic priorities were pushed to the forefront and wouldn't be lost in endless falls overseas. So when we think about retrenchment, we could argue that what the Bible is trying to do was was reprioritize and reprioritize. The kind of focus of what America was about and where its resources are going to be committed. Obama was astute enough to understand that the world was changing that.

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But China was rising up, it was going to become a substantial player in global affairs. And we can see that, with Obama articulating the idea of the Asian pivot that he made it quite clear that America's role in the world have to turn more and more pointed, his resources have to turn more towards Asia, some something that annoyed Europeans actually, perhaps to say more about the problems in Asia. There. He argued that in the future, many of the kind of security problems would exist in the world will be coming out of Asia, for example, North Korea and its nuclear programme, but in particular, the rise of China and we see the Obama administration seeking to develop stronger relationships in that part of the world. He reached out to India as a natural kind of counterbalance to China or that didn't quite work in the way that he hoped he works. He tried to accommodate the right of China by reaching out to China. But we also see as well, I think really interesting things like the Trans Pacific Partnership, which Trump when he came in on his first days rich trust. That was the very first thing on this list four days after he, he served in the den as it were not really understanding that what Obama was trying to deal with developer relationship wasn't just economic, about having a partnership between a number of states locked into a free trade bloc in the Pacific, but also the Asia Pacific region, but also that it was partly about containing the influences of China that you could accommodate the rise of China.

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But you also have to contain the rise of China. And I think that's a very interesting strand of his foreign policy, in terms of other kinds of successes. Depends on way where you sit and when he was much more multilateralist than the current president. We can say that, hands down as it were, but even Obama took the view So there will be moments where he has to prioritise America's interests. And if you if you go back to his Nobel Prize speech, which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, even before he's really done anything, but what I liked was his language, which was about multilateralism, but he went and gave a speech. And he kind of lauded the values of multilateralism. But then he said, but there are going to be times where America has to come first, where I have to prioritise the lives of American citizens. And it's interesting that you could argue that his reluctance to become involved in overseas conflicts, particularly in the Middle East reflects that. In Libya, for example, one of his advisors very famously said that in that moment in the Arab Spring, where Libyans rose up against Gaddafi, that America with lead from behind something which most americans i don't think would want to hear anyway. President adopting as a viewpoint, but I think the problem is he would be, but actually Americans would be reluctant to commit troops overseas something, something we're seeing with Trump. Now willingness to bring people back from Libya, in a sense wasn't successful. As a result of that, because Syria is as the foreign policy element that Obama himself feels was his greatest problem and ultimately, arguably, his greatest failing but but even there, you could argue that the complexity of that problem, he suggested was too difficult for America to become involved in. And he wasn't supported rarely by Western allies that David Cameron, as prime minister try to get as a commons to back Britain playing a more progressive role in Syria and to support the Obama administration that wasn't forthcoming has become and refused to support that. The farmer found himself on the curb when he went to Congress to try and get their support. And of course, the other issue is the Ukraine and Russia's resurgence that Obama found that difficult to respond to. And partly, I think because European powers again, were wary about getting engaged in any strong position against Russia, primarily because they were relying on energy supplies from Russia at that point, and nobody wants to conflict in Europe.

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So these things made Obama look weak. But there's an artist because a bigger picture that we need to think about here about how the farmer is part of the president working in a multilateral world often found that multi-lateralism didn't go in his favour. So Obama very famously said in 2012, in his State of the Union space, not yet I'm closing in here, anyone who tells you that America is in decline, doesn't know what he's talking about, you know, America, journey Obama presidency, this filter now has the world's leading universities. It's got the largest military in the world. If you think about the American military budget, it's larger than the next seven to 10 countries added together, depending on whose statistics you look at. That includes China, Russia, major NATO allies, and so on. It has not v multinational corporations, the world as in the most powerful multinational corporations in the world, the dollar is still the preferred currency. So when we think about declined ism, I think that's a difficult one. I think what Obama was trying to do was reposition America in a rapidly changing world in which he could see that there was a multipolar world developing and that he had to ensure that America was a key player within that and if not the dominant player. One of the key players or preferably the dominant player, but that would mean accommodating others rising up as well. Now, that might look like decline ism, but not necessarily. And it depends on how you approach this. There are many different writers writing about this free to carry, it was very well known for his argument that it's about the rise of the rest that America doesn't need to fear the rise of the rest because that could actually be good for the United States of America. And there are other writers who who say, you know, we need to be careful here about this being negative for America long term.

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But I think Obama's ability was that he could see how the world was changing his see the complexity of that. And it was about moving the pieces around ensuring that America remains the dominant player. That's very difficult to sell to the American public. That is much more difficult to express, then we are going to make America great again, which is a very simple message, which can mean whatever you want it to me on lots of armour, I think there was that, that complexity that he found difficult to articulate at times. If you're trying to the message about, about the fact that problems now crossing borders like climate change, or if we think now that the corona virus, and that there are problems now that cross state borders that require international cooperation, there are now a growing number of non state actors, some of whom are very destructive in their capabilities, if we think about terrorists, and so on, or criminal networks, these are much more complex things to talk about, in simply making your country great again or putting America first. So I think part of Obama's problem is articulating that message. And I think also it was present during the credit crunch moment. Where other powers were either resurgent Russia or rising up like China and America was in a position of having to recover from an economic collapse and military struggles overseas.