

**TRANSCRIPT:
QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
ASKED BY PRESIDENT PETAR STOYANOV
ANSWERED BY PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON
AT THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH AND 1ST ANNUAL MEETING OF CGDC
05-21-2011**

QUESTION 1:

Mr. President, we have all witnessed the events in Northern African and the Arab world and the crucial role which Facebook played in rallying young people in Tunisia, Egypt and other countries in the region would you share with us about the thoughts of how world politics have changed, keeping in mind the effects of globalisation, social media and the IT revolution?

First of all, I think this will lead to more such movements around the world and I think that it will lead to more non-democratic government's attempts to control such communication. I think that there will be an even greater study. Mr Gaddafi made a real effort to shut down a lot of the internet and cell phone traffic. The Chinese websites are monitored regularly and this has happened all over the world. This will become a new arena in a battle for the future. That is first thing.

The second thing is that I think that if you really think about it, the leaders of those young people in Indonesia and Cairo, they are sort of like a NGO, a non-governmental organisation, they are private citizens trying to have a public impact. And technology has changed that in ways that are far removed from North Africa and the Middle East.

Do you remember when the tsunami first hit South Asia? It was the first natural disaster, touching people's hearts all around the world, where huge numbers of very poor people or modest means, gave a little of their money because they could use the internet to do it. For example, Americans gave a billion dollars. The average contribution in America was 250 dollars. The median contribution, the one in the middle, was 56 dollars - because of the internet.

Even the earthquake happened in Haiti, close to our shores, a country where 2/3 of the people live on less than 2 dollars a day, Americans gave a billion dollars and the median was even lower as it was one of the first disasters where people could contribute over the cell phone. You could type in Haiti and you can pick a number for the Red Cross and Red Crescent, you can pick a number for the Clinton-Bush Humanitarian Fund and you could pick numbers for other things. I say this to say that I think that a lot of the political conversation which used to be local will now be global. On the other hand, governments still matter and economic opportunities still matter and they will be affixed to the land, they will be local.

There is either oil under your land or there is not. Your people either have an education which can do certain jobs or they don't. You can either get investment or you cannot.

So, that brings me to the next point, I was very impressed with young people in Tunis and in Cairo who were interviewed. It is obvious that they had no real notion of some extremist political platform or even a moderate one. They just wanted a country where everyone got heard and sensible things were done. But throughout history, every time there is a sudden upheaval and the old order is wiped away, there is always an attempt to hijack the change. One of the things that our Serbian friends I think would be proud of is that they struggled with all the legitimate political currents in Serbia and still you know, kept alive a genuine sense of political democracy and genuine debate and a sense of moving into the future.

But remember when the Russian Revolution was held, the first leader of Russia was Alexander Kerensky, who was a genuine moderate democrat with a small 'd' and he lasted a few months until Lenin deposed him and the revolution took a different course. When the Ayatollah Khomeini went home from Paris to Tehran, he was part of a coalition of people, which included a lot of Western educated, outward looking, progressive people who did not want a theocracy in Iran but they were deposed and Iran took a different course. So, we do not really know what is going to happen in Tunis or Cairo...or any number of other places. That does not mean that it is bad, it just means that if you are really committed to sharing the future, you have to stay active and stay involved and stay vigilant because there are still a lot of incentives not to share the future and to distract people by getting them to not focus on their grievances and divisions so other people can reap the political and economic rewards of it. So, the whole issue is still under debate I think.

QUESTION 2:

I found one question which is very interesting which was sent by a lady who is a Professor at the University in Belgrade. Mr President, as you know the 90s were the difficult times for the relations between Serbia and America. You are improving now our relations, but could you explain me more about where do we stand in the future?

Well, you know, you don't get over what we went through overnight and it was not easy for us and it was certainly not easy for the Serbs, but I sense a genuine forward-looking attitude on the part of the Serbs and I think that United States is ready to work through it. I think that if we all set our minds to it, we might be able to help our friends in Bosnia and end the impasse there and lead all of the basically south eastern part of the Balkans to a very different and more prosperous and peaceful place.

So, you know, my advice now would be, to take advantage of this upcoming trip from the Secretary of State and get some reciprocal trip coming into the United States and for us to find a way to begin to work together in a way which is not to destabilize a basically solid political leadership in Serbia. Because they get hit of making us with us too fast- they may have to be careful not to be seen to be warming up to us too fast.

I also think that we should really try and help our friends in Bosnia. The Dayton Peace Accords did a world of good, it stopped all the killing, it guaranteed that people could not have their fundamental political and cultural and religious identities stripped away. But in order to make those guarantees and make it bearable in effect it gave all the different factions the right to veto anything significant being done. And it was assumed at the time that veto would be used to stop, if you had a shifting Presidency for example or shifting populations or different conditions on the border, it could always be used to stop the other side from taking advantage of your fundamental identity. Instead, it is being used to stop a reasonable movement into the future. So, I hope that if this relationship between Belgrade and the US improves and that the main beneficiary will be all the people in all the communities of Bosnia.

Let me tell you all one other thing, last November, I went to Vietnam to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the normalization of relationships between the United States and Vietnam – in law and economics and cooperation for security.

General Wes Clark was a young officer in Vietnam, he could have been killed there and I thank God that he was not. He went on to have a great career. The experience he had there and of countless other young Americans like him, shaped their lives. So did it shape the Vietnamese, who lost an even higher percentage of their people by far. After all the death and all the destruction you would think, 'Oh these people will never get along.' The movement to normalize relations in Vietnam was led in the United States senate by John McCain, who was a brutalized and tortured Prisoner of War for about 5 and a half years, by John Kerry who was wounded there, by Chuck Rob, who was in unbelievable combat and in the House by a man called Pete Pearson who was a Prisoner of War for even longer than McCain was.

Ok, 15 years later, America does not have a stronger ally in all of Asia than Vietnam. Their capital income went from 300 dollars a year in 1995 to 1,500 dollars a year in 2010, it went up five fold because they began to be obsessed with the future.

I would like to see, if we think about where we are going not just with Belgrade but also with Bosnia, with all these other issues. I like more people to look at the example of Vietnam. Whatever your grip is, you could not have possibly experienced as much death and destruction, as they did, as we did. It had many nightmares and bad memories. I see General Clark nodding his head here. And I think that it is fair to say that I do not know a single American from either political party who does not believe that we not done the right thing here – by letting go of past and embracing future.

QUESTION 3:

Actually, one of the objectives of this forum, is to improve relationship between business and politics. The next question is addressing exactly the same issue, how to promote transparency and responsibility in emerging countries? What is your opinion of how you think the relationship between politics and businesses can be improved to avoid the negative practices of corruption to achieve greater transparency and cooperation?

Well, first I think you have to avoid false choices. That is in my experience, anyway, there is no successful country anywhere that does not have both an effective government doing a few basic things government has to do and an effective economy. So increasingly they work together.

On the other hand, there are lots of places, where under the name of working together there is a lot of corruption as the government takes money from the private sector and then does whatever the specific interests the private sector want and the rest of the population is left out.

So, my belief is and we need to do this in America today, not so much because of corruption but because of the huge debate we are having about the role of government. I think that in every country there should be an attempt to say, 'ok, at this moment in our development, what do we want our government to do?', and define it and be honest with people, tell them, 'these are 10 things we would like to do, but we cannot, this is what we can do now.' Then, 'how are we going to get the money to do this?' And, I think that you have to have, an honest revenue system that raises what you can raise from your own people and I think that you have to be honest about what you can raise from your own people without making the economy worse, if you are a developing country.

And then, this is where I believe again this is where technology can play a major role. I personally believe that transparency and the lack the corruption is so important. That every company should post on the internet the sources of its revenue and how it is distributed, who gets it and what is done with it. I think that if you would do it, it would cure a lot of corruption.

I will give you an example, when I went to work for the United Nations in Indonesia after the tsunami – Indonesia was hurt the worst. I had a few friends who said, you know, 'You are crazy to do this, this will ruin your reputation – they have a terrible, terrible corruption problem'. But the President of Indonesia promised me this one thing. He said, 'I will put an end to that, because I am going to put a wonderful, strong person in charge of this and give them power of all the ministries and if you want to put everything we do on the internet, you can do it.' He kept his word. He appointed a man named Pak Kuntoro to run the reconstruction. He is one of the 2 or 3 ablest people I have ever worked with. And every single penny we got from every donor country and the money which we got from the NGOs, all went on the internet here is how much money is coming in here is who has got the money and then we did a performance audit of it and published that on the internet. And between the press and the tax payers and the pride people had, all of a sudden not being corrupt almost everyone agrees it was the most honest reconstruction project ever done in the world. And that is what we are trying to do in Haiti now. So, my advice is, have total transparency and effectiveness, because in the end, and I, by the way through my foundation, I work in dozens of countries around the world and I have a strict non-corruption understanding with the governments with which I work. If it is violated I just leave. I think that you have to as that is the only way to have consistent long-term investment flows. Now, in the short run, you can get more money from some countries if you do give special favors and if you do take extra money, but if you do want to

build a diversified economy with a free people and a free government, you have to do it in an open way and basically let people follow the money. I just think that the safest way is to follow the money.

I have been very impressed, in the Middle East, in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain both had economic plans, which involved measuring themselves by improving their standing in the World Bank's rankings of competitiveness. And the Saudi's moved from 65th – 12th, I think, in about 5 years. Bahrain has moved from 39th to 13th in about 3 years. Qatar has also moved up and the UAE has also moved up. All these things have happened.

I would like to see countries organize themselves and measure themselves on both the Competitiveness Index and the Transparency Index. And, I think that if you do both things it would drive the world in a certain direction – it would become a competition. And the economic and social benefits would be breathtaking. I also think that it is a good thing to use a lot of NGOs. Rwanda improved its per capita income dramatically, in the 4 years after the genocide their income was less than a dollar a day and they had this literal, hardcore policy of working together, not focusing on the past. They built a Holocaust museum, they told the facts the best they could about who died, what caused it and what happened. They said, 'we are not going to talk about this anymore, we are in the future business'. They adopted a lot of other strategies to promote transparency and investment, including welcoming foreign NGOs. So that is my other idea. I think that by far the most important thing we can do is for every country should measure itself on the Competitiveness Index and the Transparency Index.

QUESTION 4:

Which steps and structures will help to overcome the big challenges of our generation like, climate change, the demographic explosion in Africa, South America and big parts of Asia, the global economic imbalances and the spread of humanitarian rights?

OK, let us start with the population problem. The population explosion is really in some ways a tribute to our successes with basic public health and other changes which have affected people in even poor countries. And it is not just more people being born, more people are living longer. And I am here in Vienna to go to the AIDS Life Ball tonight to try to figure out how to make people live even longer who happen to have HIV and AIDS.

Then, if you want to talk about slowing the population growth, it is important to try to, as we are putting enormous strains, about 80-90 % of the world's fishing centers are basically under stocked today there is a water shortage in many places and lots of other ecosystem problems besides climate change, they are more directly traceable to the demand to feed about 7 billion people. And every time talk about birth control or contraception, or anything else, you have all of these political, cultural or religious differences of opinion. So I have only one simple answer to that, there is only one strategy which has been broadly embraced across all religious, geographic and cultural lines which has slowed the birth rate by delaying