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Time coded Script

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| 01; 00; 03; 09 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | This week on Moyers & Company… |
| 01; 00; 05; 28 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | The Republican Party is defined as, and I think accurately defined, as a party that looks out for the interests of the very wealthy. |
| 01; 00; 15; 00 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Elites in our society including financial elites I think that they really have in a lot of ways rigged the system in their own favor. I just think that actually markets are a cure for that rather than the disease. |
| 01; 00; 25; 15 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | And… |
| 01; 00; 26; 01 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Moderate Republicans still exist, they're just Democrats now. And that's why the Republican Party has been distilled to its extreme. |
| 01; 00; 32; 23 | ANNOUNCER: |
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|  | Carnegie Corporation of New York, celebrating 100 years of philanthropy, and committed to doing real and permanent good in the world.  The Kohlberg Foundation.  Independent Production Fund, with support from The Partridge Foundation, a John and Polly Guth Charitable Fund.  The Clements Foundation.  Park Foundation, dedicated to heightening public awareness of critical issues.  The Herb Alpert Foundation, supporting organizations whose mission is to promote compassion and creativity in our society.  The Bernard and Audre Rapoport Foundation.  The John D. And Catherine T. Macarthur Foundation, committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. More information at Macfound.Org.”  Anne Gumowitz.  The Betsy And Jesse Fink Foundation.  The HKH Foundation.  Barbara G. Fleischman.  And by our sole corporate sponsor, Mutual of America, designing customized individual and group retirement products. That’s why we’re your retirement company. |
| 01; 01; 41; 02 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Welcome. It's the weekend after, and Barack Obama is back in the White House, Democrats are back in control of the Senate, and Republicans are back running the House. That's what prevailed before Americans voted, when deadlock reigned in Washington, little got done, and the country was frustrated and angry. Are we in for more of the same? The talk we are hearing in Washington sounds altogether too familiar.  So let's consider what's ahead with two people of different philosophies about what should be done. Bob Herbert was a long time liberal columnist for "The New York Times" until he retired last year and became a distinguished senior fellow for the national think tank Demos. He's been on the road for months now, reporting for his forthcoming book, "Wounded Colossus."  Reihan Salam writes “The Agenda” – that’s a daily blog for the conservative National Review Online. He is a policy advisor at the think tank Economics 21 and a columnist for Reuters. He is also the co-author with Ross Douthat of the much talked-about book, "Grand New Party: How Republicans Can Win the Working Class and Save the American Dream."  Welcome to both of you. |
| 01; 02; 51; 28 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | Great to see you, Bill. |
| 01; 02; 52; 25 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Bob, what will you remember about this election? |
| 01; 02; 55; 09 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | Well, the first thing I'll remember is the way people turned out to vote in this election in the face of tremendous voter suppression efforts. And I just think they've been really American heroes because they stood up and said, "You are not going to take the vote away from us." Some people stood in line for six, seven and eight hours. Some had been in areas that had been damaged by the storm. And I just think that they were there upholding democracy. So that's the first thing that I remember about it. |
| 01; 03; 23; 22 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | They were also there making delicious pecan tarts. Because when I voted the kids in the school were selling baking goods, and they were having a great time of it. What will you remember? |
| 01; 03; 33; 15 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Oh, that's a tough one to say. I think that for a lot of conservatives and a lot of Republicans this was a very disappointing election that opened a lot of folks’ eyes to some of the deeper changes that have happened in the country, much more so in some respects than the 2008 election which I think a lot of folks wrote off as a one off, as a fluke, something that reflected very unique historical circumstances.  But I think this election really did demonstrate that there's been a dramatic change particularly with regard to social issues and how folks talk about them. So I think that that has proven very sobering already for a lot of folks on the right. |
| 01; 04; 09; 09 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | With the exception of the civil rights movement have you ever seen change take place regarding cultural mores and behavior more than it happened with gay people and marriage equality and all of that which seemed to come out positively in this election? Have you ever seen change like this? |
| 01; 04; 26; 24 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | Well, I think that what's important to note though is that these changes came about as a result of the gay rights movement which has been very fierce for a long time, and they've not given up. I think that that effort was very similar to the civil rights movement, and the women's movement and that sort of thing. |
| 01; 04; 48; 09 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I have a somewhat different view. I think that when you look at the history of same sex marriage in particular it's an issue that a lot of folks in the official gay rights movement were skeptical towards. But then you had some folks at the local level in Massachusetts, places like that who really kept pushing the issue even though early on it looked like an issue that was going to be very unpopular and difficult. Yet they kept pushing it. And you've really seen a sea change in the space of really a decade-- |
| 01; 05; 12; 00 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I'm talking less-- |
|  | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | --on this issue. |
| 01; 05; 13; 06 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I'm sorry. I'm talking less about gay marriage than about gay rights in general. So over a long period of time you have the gay rights movement so that you now have younger people growing up where it is normal to see gays in, you know, just any aspect of American life. I think the idea of marriage almost flows naturally from that. |
| 01; 05; 34; 17 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I think that's a fair way to put it. I think that a lot of it-- I often think about this in the context of, when you look at a lot of other social issues or things you could-- for example, think about concerns about drone warfare that some folks on the right and the left have expressed, one of the barriers to that becoming a really big issue is that frankly there are not a lot of Americans who know people who live you know, in the areas most directly impacted by that.  Whereas there are a lot of Americans who have the experience of knowing, you know, a relative, a cousin, a brother, a friend who is lesbian or gay. So I think that that's a big part of the transformation. And it actually speaks to this larger issue of empathy and understanding in a society in which, you know, we live so far apart from each other, we live in such different contexts, we're able to be around people who look like us and think like us, so you know, I think that's one of the deeper barriers behind constructive change in our politics. |
| 01; 06; 25; 06 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Was this election a game changer? |
| 01; 06; 27; 27 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | You know, I think that people should be cautious in assessing what may come out of this election. But what does strike me about it are the stark divides. And to me, it's so clear, people have been talking about obviously the racial and ethnic divides, the breakdown of the vote.  But there's also a very strong class divide in this country. And so I think when people are talking about change, what they want is a change in the economic dynamic in this country. So you have the middle class losing ground, you have the ranks of the poor expanding. And the number one issue in all the polls for most Americans is jobs. And people feel that not enough has been done about jobs.  But I don't think that we can get any kind of real healing in this country until we start acknowledging these deep divides. And we keep trying to paper over it. There's the ethnic, racial and ethnic divide and then there's the class divide and we're in trouble if we don't do something about them. |
| 01; 07; 35; 11 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | We need to be clear that this is a party that has been hostile to the interests of African Americans and hostile to the interests of Latinos in this country and hostile to the interests of working people in this country.  So you have to begin to address their concerns. And the Republican Party is hostile to their concerns. |
| 01; 07; 56; 15 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Well, I respectfully disagree with that take. I think that Republicans aren't hostile to the interests of minority voters. But what I do think is fair is that when you look at the folks who voted for Mitt Romney, 88 percent of them were non Hispanic whites. |
| 01; 08; 09; 14 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Non-Hispanic whites. |
| 01; 08; 11; 00 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Exactly, non-Hispanic whites, and what that implies is that when you're in these conversations among conservatives sometimes when you don't have people from these other groups who can engage in these conversations you miss a great deal.  And that's one reason why there are a lot of conservatives, myself included, who believe that we do have messages, ideas and strategies that would be relevant for achieving economic uplift and much else. But the problem is that when you don't have a more diverse group of people who are part of the conversation, then I think that it makes it very hard to translate that message to folks who are inclined to distrust. |
| 01; 08; 41; 20 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I would say that if you are going to target voters on the basis of the fact that they are African American or the fact that they are Latino and try to prevent them from voting on that basis, voter suppression, that is being hostile to the interests of those groups. And if you start talking about self deportation, that is being hostile to the interests of Latino Americans. So I think that, you know, I think that we really need to be clear about this because unless we understand it we can't begin to heal that wound. And that's a grievous wound in this society. |
| 01; 09; 17; 17 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Yeah, I mean, I don't see it the same way. I don't see a lot of the efforts to reform voter ID laws and what have you the same way that you do, but I absolutely believe that your perspective is widely shared, and it's an important one. But I think-- |
| 01; 09; 27; 19 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | But didn't the governor of Pennsylvania say, when they were talking about the voter restrictions in Pennsylvania saying, "This is how we're going to win Pennsylvania for Mitt Romney"? |
| 01; 09; 35; 03 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Well, no, there was a state senator who said that-- |
| 01; 09; 37; 15 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | Excuse me, a State Senator. |
| 01; 09; 39; 09 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | --this will allow Mitt Romney to win the election. Now, the implication of that is that the suggestion was that there's such pervasive fraud that he wouldn't be able to win without it. I do not think that is correct. But I think that actually when you parse what he was saying I think that's what he meant. And I think that you're actually illustrating my point in a wonderful way.  There's so much distrust that-- and of course people aren't inclined to give him the benefit of the doubt. Let's interpret what he said in the most favorable possible light because there is legitimate distrust that is rooted in the fact that these are communities that don't generally talk to each other. |
| 01; 10; 10; 02 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | But you know, I brought you together because both of you from different perspectives have been writing about the people at the bottom of our economic ladder. Is anything going to change for those people? |
| 01; 10; 21; 19 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | You have nearly 50 million Americans who are officially classified as poor. You have another 50 million who we call the near poor or just a notch or two above the official poverty line. That's almost 100 million Americans, and that's almost a third of the entire population. If you talk about college graduates from about 2005, 2006 up until now, only about 50 percent have full time jobs of any kind and many of them are not jobs that require a college degree. And when college graduates are taking jobs that high school graduates used to have, that pushes the high school graduates out of the work force. And we know what's been happening to dropouts, I mean, they're just almost completely left behind.  We have not paid enough attention to this employment crisis in this country and we have not paid enough attention to the families who are struggling and losing their grip on the dream. I don't think either party has done a decent job in this area. I think the Republican Party is defined, and I think accurately defined as a party that looks out for the interests of the very wealthy. The Democratic Party less so, but I think they look out for the interests of the wealthy, too, before they look out for the interests of working Americans. |
| 01; 11; 35; 21 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I think that we certainly have had a deep employment crisis since 2008. But I think that to my mind the crisis started much earlier on. I think when you look at the Bush years for example, if you look at the recovery that we had during that period of time, the housing boom I think actually masked some of these deeper problems.  So for example during that era you saw really dramatic losses in manufacturing employment, yet you had employment in housing construction. And so there were a lot of folks who thought, you know, "Gosh, this is something that can sustain people, a lot of these kind of men who are really struggling to get on the economic ladder."  And I think that when that went away we really saw that there was this hollowing out of the middle class, that had been going on for a very long time. And so I think that, you know, the problem is that it's not just this immediate crisis is a huge deal and I would want us to do more about the immediate crisis. But I think that there's a deeper hollowing out. And to my mind a deeper hollowing out is really about something I always like to talk about which is about networks.  When you're talking about human capital, building skills, all of these other things that, you know, we want folks to do in order to thrive in a changing economy, you've got to do that by having relationships, by being embedded in stable communities.  And in my opinion the really big issue is that when you look at mass incarceration, when you look at a lot of other social changes, when you look at family breakdown, I think that these are things that are kind of like an undertow that is shaping what we're seeing happening above the surface. And I think the problem is that policy has a very hard time dealing with some of these things. It can make a big difference on, for example we can throw fewer people in jail and destroy fewer communities and fewer lives that way. |
| 01; 13; 11; 25 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | California just to steps to weaken their three strikes and you're out policy. That's a step in the right direction. |
| 01; 13; 16; 10 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | And you also have folks on both sides of the political aisle who are making progress on that. |
| 01; 13; 20; 25 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | But in terms of Washington politics it looks to me as if all the blood, sweat and tears of this campaign, all those billions of dollars ended up with the status quo.  The Republican leadership in Washington said the day after the election, "No new revenue, no new taxes."  And many conservative activists are not yielding an inch despite the election results. Let me play for you an excerpt from a video that was put out by one of the leading conservative activists at the Heritage Foundation which is sort of the granddaddy of conservative think tanks. |
| 01; 13; 58; 07 | MIKE NEEDHAM: |
|  | President Obama’s re-election is a devastating blow. But it’s not a decisive defeat. We are in a war. We’re in a war to save this nation. And abandoning our post will condemn it to a future of managed decline. To win this war we must remain committed to fighting President Obama’s agenda. We’ll work with our friends in Congress to remain true to our conservative principles. In 2014 there will be 20 Senate liberals up for re-election. A strong, constitutionally conservative Senate is critical to this fight. And in 2016, with a deep bench of committed conservatives, let’s choose a nominee who can best articulate our shared conservative values. |
| 01; 14; 39; 00 | RONALD REAGAN: |
|  | You and I have a rendezvous with destiny. If we lose freedom here there’s no place to escape. This is the last stand on earth. |
| 01; 14; 46; 16 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | This is issued the day after the election of 2012. It's a declaration of war to win the election of 2014 and 2016. What does that augur? What does that portend for getting things done? |
| 01; 15; 03; 16 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Well, I've got to say, I think that after the 2004 election there were a lot of folks on the political left who were very dispirited by the result, and some who were very surprised by the result. And I think that in our-- the way that I see our political process is that we've had some deep and enduring disagreements about a lot of things for centuries.  And our political parties are very flawed vehicles, but they're vehicles for working through these disagreements, sometimes reaching compromises but also making the case for the country. So when you say that we spent that money and got basically the same result, here's what happened. There are a lot of folks who poured their blood, sweat and tears into making that case as vigorously and energetically as they could.  And it's also a learning process, particularly for folks on my side of the fence that, you know, we made that case. And I think there are a lot of ways in which it just didn't translate very well. So for example this whole message at the Republican National Convention of, "You didn't build that," that was the kind of thing that resonated for someone like me. It didn't resonate for either of you guys I imagine.  And my sense is that the problem is that what they were really trying to talk about is the importance of civil society, the importance of that space between government and individuals where characters are formed, where new ventures are started, where we try and experiment and we try-- and I think that that space is really important, it's just that conservatives don't have the right language for talking about it. So I think that-- |
| 01; 16; 18; 12 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Well, you think that's the right language, what we just heard? |
| 01; 16; 20; 23 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Look, I think that what we just heard, you know, I've got to say I'm a lot more sympathetic to it than I imagine other folks are. |
| 01; 16; 26; 10 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | I'm sure you are. I mean, you are philosophically a conservative. |
| 01; 16; 29; 28 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | But I think that the message-- look, people have fallen into despair. There are a lot of folks on the political right just as there were folks in the political left the day after Election Day in 2004, and I think that part of this is about keeping people engaged and motivated to keep making the case. Now, I do think that Speaker Boehner did say that he was open to new revenue, it is an open question about how many folks in this caucus will be.  There are a lot of Republicans, Tom Coburn, the rock-ribbed conservative senator from Oklahoma has also been very open about it. So I think that you are seeing some people who are very firmly on the political right who are saying that, "Look, we're willing to give an inch on revenues if we can also make some reforms on the spending side." |
| 01; 17; 05; 23 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I think we're missing the point when we look at the political parties. We should keep our eye on what's happening to working families. And working families have been hurting since at least the 1970s. And they've been hanging on by, you know, one manner or another that is really not fundamental.  The fundamental way families make money is through work and savings and buying a home and accumulating wealth. But what's been happening is that first you had wives and mothers that went into the workforce. Now, ultimately this was a good thing for women to be in the workforce, but it initially started because families did not have enough income.  Then people began maxing out their credit cards, building up incredible amounts of debt. Then there was the housing bubble where people starting using their homes as ATMs for example. And then ultimately came the crash. But they've been hanging on by hook or by crook. And they've been doing this because they haven't been getting a fair wage for a day's work and because there's been a concerted effort to prevent them from organizing and negotiating on their own behalf, primarily through labor unions.  So what has happened is and both parties have collaborated to some degree or another-- both parties collaborated in the, I think, in the demise of the clout of big labor. The Republican Party has been at war with labor and the Democratic Party has not fought strong enough on labor's behalf. And the Republican Party has also fought to keep people from being able to make their case at the ballot box.  So we need to understand that there are these attacks, these sustained attacks on the interests of working people. And those attacks have been working out. I agree wholeheartedly that this jobs crisis did not start with the Great Recession which started in December 2007. It started long before then. And until we look at what's happening with working people and specifically decide what steps we can take to help them, all this chatter about the different political parties is not going to mean much.  I don't think the parties are actually going to ever take the lead in turning this situation around. What I think is very important is for people outside of the political process, for people who are not elected officials to organize working people and organize those who are working on behalf of working people and then to mobilize to bring pressure on public officials and the political parties to actually bring about meaningful change. |
| 01; 19; 39; 18 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Bob and I have fundamentally different view about the origins of this crisis. I think we do agree that there is a real crisis, that it's been in place for a very long time. My own view is that when you look at the biggest, most important, most crucial sectors of our economy, the health sector and the education sector, these have been the sectors that have been tremendously burdensome for middle income families.  When you think about a middle income life in this country I think you think about some modicum of stability. You think about having health insurance, you think about having access to a decent education. And I think that actually those sectors, our efforts to help, our efforts to subsidize, our efforts to actually introduce regulations and controls in order to, you know, perfect our health and education systems, I think it actually really backfired in lots of ways.  They prevented us from having a lot of the innovation that we need that would drive down costs. And I think you see a similar dynamic in housing. Housing is a domain where you're absolutely right, a lot of Americans have built wealth through accumulating housing wealth. But I think that actually our efforts to improve and perfect the housing market I think really backfired. Now, this is a very deep and fundamental disagreement. But I think that, you know, that's certainly the perspective that I have and a lot of folks on my side of the aisle share.  And I think that it is frankly difficult to reconcile with Bob's view in a lot of ways. Because, you know, we tend to think that experimentation, trial and error and actually more entry and more innovation is actually the way to address some of these problems-- |
| 01; 21; 00; 06 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | One of the ways to address some of these problems is to have a more equitable sharing of the wealth in this country. So I'll give you just one quick example. In 2010 93 percent of all income gains went to the top one percent of Americans. Now, how is anyone who's in a working class type family, and I use working class in the broadest sense. How are they supposed to begin to make headway if they can't get a bigger share of the advances that are being made over the course of any given year? |
| 01; 21; 35; 15 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I see that as a byproduct of a broken economic model-- |
| 01; 21; 37; 24 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | We agree that this model is broken. |
| 01; 21; 40; 21 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | And my own view is that actually a more market-oriented decentralized model that would allow for more entry would actually give people more access to the skills-- |
| 01; 21; 48; 19 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | But isn't that what we've been doing, this market oriented model? Isn't that what we've been doing, at least since 1980, increasingly market oriented? |
| 01; 21; 55; 00 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I've got to say I disagree pretty strongly. I think that particularly in the domains of education and health I think that we've seen a dramatic expansion not only of public sector spending but also of regulation which I actually think is a bigger deal. I don't object to spending as such. If you look at societies in northern Europe like Sweden and Denmark, these are societies that are very market, in some ways more free market than the United States.  But the issue is actually the regulation that protects incumbent firms. When you're looking at powerful incumbent firms whether they're public sector firms or private sector firms I think-- I actually agree that they have way too much power. So I actually agree that when I'm looking at elites in our society including financial elites I think that they really have in a lot of ways rigged the system in their own favor. I just think that actually markets are a cure for that rather than the disease. |
| 01; 22; 41; 29 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Let me ask both of you if you think President Obama is going to be able or committed to the changes that you think are important? He's already being pointed in different directions. Here's a story by David Ignatius, a very respected writer for "The Washington Post" saying, "Mr. Obama, take big risks, get it done. A successful second term is less about ideology than results."  This column by William Saletan on "Slate" who says, "Cheer up, Republicans, you should be happy. You're going to have a moderate Republican president for the next four years. His name is Barack Obama. He's in the same mold," says William Saletan, "As Dwight Eisenhower, Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford and he stands where the GOP used to stand and will be standing once again." Now, if you can see the tensions there that people are reading into and out of Obama. |
| 01; 23; 36; 00 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I have a quite different perspective from William Saletan. I think that actually President Obama in passing his health law really took a big gamble. Because he really wanted to complete the project that he saw as having been started, some could say 100 years ago, some could say with LBJ with Medicare and Medicaid, it was very important to him. And so even when it was very clear that he was suffering some political consequences he thought, "It is crucial that we complete the welfare state in this way--" |
| 01; 24; 02; 16 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I agree with that. |
| 01; 24; 04; 01 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | "--and continue to build and enhance it." And I also think that frankly the model of the Affordable Care Act is not in my view very sustainable and I think that over time you're likely to see progressives work to introduce new modes of cost containment that are going to involve a somewhat heavier hand from government.  You're going to see for example the reintroduction of the idea of a public option for folks under 65. I think that what you're going to see is a deepening of the progressive project under President Obama who has a tremendous amount of leverage right now. Now, that happens to be something that I don't favor. I don't think that that's the right way for-- |
| 01; 24; 34; 01 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Bob does. Bob doesn't think he's going to be progressive enough, right? |
| 01; 24; 37; 16 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | That's exactly right. |
| 01; 24; 39; 00 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Right, and perhaps that’s true from Bob's perspective. I don't think the President Obama's views are identical to Bob's. But I tend to think that-- |
| 01; 24; 45; 21 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | That's an understatement. |
| 01; 24; 47; 03 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Yeah, but I do think that Barack Obama-- |
| 01; 24; 48; 18 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You've been quite critical of Obama during the first three years. |
| 01; 24; 51; 01 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | But I think that Barack Obama is very much a progressive. I do not think that he's an Eisenhower Republican or a Gerald Ford Republican. I think that he's someone who really does want to deepen a larger social transformation. I'm also somewhat, I also believe that he really does believe in this idea that public investment is what will likely grow the economy. |
| 01; 25; 09; 05 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | When I grew up President Obama would have been considered a moderate Republican I suppose. Maybe somebody would have said he's a liberal Republican and I might have taken issue with it. I think that we're, you know, with President Obama we know what we've got. And I expect more of the same. I think that he's going to try and make a deal with the Republicans on this fiscal cliff thing.  And I think it's the wrong way to go. I do not think that austerity and more tax cuts are going to do anything to help working people. I think it's actually going to harm working people. I think it'll end up throwing more people out of work. We should just let the Bush tax cuts expire and we should end the war in Afghanistan and bring those troops home.  And we should start to use the additional money that's available for the investments that will put people back to work. And then ultimately, not in the short term, then ultimately begin to take care of, bring down some of these budget deficits. But I don't think that that's going to happen with the political parties as I said. So I think that it is important right now, immediately, right after the election for folks outside the government to begin to mobilize to put pressure on President Obama and the Democrats not to cave in their negotiations with the Republicans and try to achieve some grand bargain that ultimately is going to hurt working people. |
| 01; 26; 31; 20 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | But let me ask you a personal question. As you look at how America has changed over the last 30 years and the elections seem to reinforce those changes and even represent an acceleration of those changes, how do you think about the country right now? What do you think about America? |
| 01; 26; 46; 20 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | I think of it on two tracks. On the one hand I grew up in a time when I thought it was the best time possible to grow up in America. Jobs were plentiful, a college education was affordable. And even though there were a great deal of problems we know that blacks and women had to fight against treatment that was hideously unfair and that sort of thing. You had the feeling that the country was moving in the right direction because you had the civil rights movement, you had the women's movement. Later you'd have the environmental and the gay rights movement and so forth.  So it was terrific. And so life in America is much better now generally than it was half a century ago, there's no question about that. But now we're going backwards. On some of these cultural issues we may be going forward, but if you look at what's happening, what the controversy was over women's rights for example and abortion and birth control, and that sort of thing, I just think that the country is in a period of economic decline and it's declining in other ways as well. And so I think that we need, that there should be an urgency in the effort to arrest that decline. |
| 01; 27; 54; 22 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | I see three different Americas. You have one group of folks who have college educations who are forming families and stable relationships, who have folks who can look out for them, beyond the state, who are really flourishing, who are a big part of why America continues to be such a rich country. And they're raising children in those stable households.  You have another group of folks who are at the bottom, who really are very socially isolated. They don't oftentimes have strong connections to each other. And I think that they're badly in need, of economic and also social uplift.  Then you have this group of folks in the middle, folks who have high school diplomas but not a college degree, you saw a lot of folks in these in the Midwest. These are folks who've been really buffeted by economic change. And this is a group of people who are looking more like those folks at the bottom than they are like folks at the top. You're seeing dramatic changes in family formation.  And I think that that's what I worry about the most because that broad middle group is the group that has to be the basis of shared growth and prosperity. And when those folks don't have those social connections they need in order to make investments in their own future, I think that's dangerous for all of us, and I think it's not something we think about enough. |
| 01; 28; 59; 28 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Reihan Salam, thank you very much for being with me, and the same to you, Bob Herbert. |
| 01; 29; 02; 26 | BOB HERBERT: |
|  | Bill, thanks so much. |
| 01; 29; 04; 21 | REIHAN SALAM: |
|  | Thank you. |
| 01; 29; 17; 18 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | During the final weeks of the campaign I found some welcome diversion from all the political rhetoric and ads by reading the latest book from James Fallows, he's one of our most informed and prolific journalists. The title is “China Airborne.” It's about why more than two-thirds of the new airports under construction today are being built in China -- and what this tells us of the Chinese determination to modernize and innovate, and how their ambition is going to impact America’s role in the world and our lives. It's a book I hope official Washington is reading.  For 40 years as a national correspondent for "The Atlantic" magazine, James Fallows was based in Washington -- covering politics and culture -- while also traveling and living in Asia, including several years in Japan and China.  Once the chief speechwriter for President Jimmy Carter, and editor of "U.S. News and World Report," he's received both the National Book Award. You can read his blog at TheAtlantic.com.  Jim Fallows, it's good to see you. |
| 01; 30; 16; 26 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Thank you so much, Bill. Honor and pleasure to be here. |
| 01; 30; 19; 06 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | What surprised you about this election? |
| 01; 30; 21; 14 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I guess what surprised me is, as the results sink in in the days after the election, how thorough going was the repudiation of what had seemed the unstoppable Tea Party momentum of the previous two years. And I think the fact also that in the days before the election, essentially, the right wing is saying, "Yes, this is going to go our way again, as it did in 2010." I was in touch with lots of people in the Romney campaign who really thought they were going to win and win big.  It's been fascinating. There's been very little of the narrative from the right saying, "This was stolen, it was all fraud," et cetera, et cetera. And I think they may be sinking on them that they were out of touch with the actual nature of the U.S. now. |
| 01; 31; 01; 06 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You wrote the other day that the reelection of Obama is actually more impressive and maybe more important than his election for years ago. Why? |
| 01; 31; 09; 15 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | The impressiveness because, number one, we know the goods and bads of Barack Obama now. Four years ago, everybody could project his or her own ideal hopes onto Barack Obama. The Nobel Peace Prize committee did too right after the election. So we know it's the marriage versus first date proposition.  Second, four years ago the economic collapse helped him. Now, he was there to save it. Now the economic collapse hurt him and he was able to say, "Look, it's been bad but it's going to get better. Or it could have been worse." And third, I think in the racial dynamics, the fact that he was able to overcome them is impressive.  A very sophisticated Republican ad was, "It's okay if you don't vote for him again this time." You know, you gave him a chance. We gave these people their opportunity. We see how they're doing. And I think there was a sort of permission to white Americans to not feel racist in voting against him this time. And he was able to overcome that too. |
| 01; 32; 00; 20 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You said it was important for African Americans that Obama in particular was reelected. Why? |
| 01; 32; 06; 18 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | My colleague and friend Ta-Nehisi Coates at The Atlantic, who's a wonderful African American writer based here in New York argued that of course there was this historic frontier of electing the first non-white president as the country did four years ago. And even though 53 percent of the public voted for Obama, he had 70 percent approval by the time of his inauguration. There was something that people felt good about America for having crossed this frontier.  But the reelection was a sense, sort of the normalization of success for an African American president. And not just saying, "Okay, yeah, we tried, but you saw how that went. You know, he wasn't really up to the job." That was, again, this great Republican ad. You know, you tried, he tried, it's not working. Let's, you know, let's go back to the way things are done.  There was a fascinating comment by somebody on election eve who said with a straight face that, "This election, 'cause they're changing demographics, will be the last time there are four white males on the national ticket." And, you know, wait a minute, that's a sign of sort of the normalization of Barack Obama, like Colin Powell, as an American, as opposed to an African American. |
| 01; 33; 07; 02 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Well, he is as much white as he is black. |
| 01; 33; 11; 13 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Exactly. Exactly. But, as you well know, in the long travailed American race relations, if you are any black, you are black. And so he is, a fascinating part of his autobiography is that he'd been raised outside the country, as we know from the right wing. The first time he had to decide whether he was either black or white is when he came back to college in the United States and realized there was this black, white grid in the United States, as opposed to being multi-racial, as most of the rest of the world is. |
| 01; 33; 38; 02 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | People are talking about the fight within the Republican Party over their future. But there's a fight already starting within the Democratic Party between the progressives and liberals and the Clinton Democrats who look upon themself as centrist. And there're a lot of articles as we speak appearing on the web and in the press about Obama's really a centrist. He's really a corporate Democrat. He is, and William Saletan and Slate Magazine has a piece saying he is, in fact, a moderate Republican at heart. What do you think about that? |
| 01; 34; 06; 29 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I think, on the one hand, that's true. The moderate Republicans still exist, they're just Democrats now. And that's why the Republican Party has been distilled to its extreme. Second, it certainly is true that, as you've written about and broadcasted about, there's a huge cleavage in the Democratic Party between essentially the Wall Street Democrats and the more progressive Democrats.  And that's an important issue that affected our views the first Obama administration and the second too. However, I would contend that in most of my conscious lifetime, this is the most coherent the Democratic Party has been. I mean, compared to the Republicans.  The Republicans are falling part and in complete, you know, clan war. Whereas, as you had the previous Democratic incumbent being the most impressive advocate for this Democratic incumbent. Whereas the Republicans can't mention the guy who was their previous incumbent. And so I think-- |
| 01; 34; 59; 05 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | George W. |
| 01; 34; 59; 28 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | George W., yeah, who just, you know, didn't come within a thousand miles of the convention or wasn't mentioned in the speeches. So I think that the Democrats, they do have these tensions. But at least they can have some sense of a majority party, which they hadn't thought of themselves as for a long time. Being able to say, "Okay, how do we address the basically progressive narrative we have that's not just tax cuts and it's not just the top one percent?" |
| 01; 35; 27; 07 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Before this campaign began, I picked up and reread your book you wrote many years ago on the press called "Breaking The News," right? |
|  | And I read it, I watched the campaign informed by it. You were tough on the media in that book, and had been in many of your long articles. So what did we miss in this campaign? The mainstream press? |
| 01; 35; 45; 06 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I think that there is the mainstream press, there is a tropism that we both talked about towards the horserace of politics. And we did better in that part of the coverage than the right wing press, which I think is now shocked to realize they created a bubble for themselves which, until now, has been a message advantage. They could sort of discipline their troops. Now they're realizing it's a strategic disadvantage 'cause they didn't know what was going on in the world. They were caught by surprise. |
| 01; 36; 12; 04 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Talk about that bubble. |
| 01; 36; 13; 06 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I have a beloved family member who is a loyal, whose information intake is entirely from Fox News. This is an older woman who I'm related to. And she honestly believed that Obama was not born in the United States or think that's an open question. That it is a socialist agenda.  And I think that people in this bubble really did think that Romney was certain to win because everybody they knew supported him and opposed Obama. It's like the flip side of the old unfair joke about Pauline Kael who said, "How could Nixon win in '72?  "Everybody I know voted for McGovern." Apparently, she never actually said that. But we know the attitude it exemplifies. The right is now in that bubble. Everybody they know hates Obama. So how could all these people be voting for Obama? |
| 01; 37; 04; 17 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | In the hours leading up to the election, Fox News devoted itself to speculation about Romney's win. Newt Gingrich and others were talking about how big the Romney landslide was going to be. Gingrich thought it would be 300 electoral votes at least. |
| 01; 37; 20; 18 | NEWT GINGRICH on Fox News: |
|  | I believe the minimum result will be 53-47 Romney, over 300 electoral votes, and the republicans will pick up the Senate. |
| 01; 37; 30; 04 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | So are you suggesting that they, a conservative propaganda machine, was blindsided by its own ideology? |
| 01; 37; 37; 27 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I think that is so. And I think we may have seen a tipping point in this election because in all previous elections, notably the 2010 midterms, we were impressed by the way the conservative propaganda machine was able to really mobilize people who thought that the deficit was the greatest threat to the nation, et cetera, et cetera. And now, it seems to have shifted to the liability question 'cause they didn't know what country they were operating in, which was the way they would've caricatured liberals over the last couple of generations.  They don't know what the real America is like. Peggy Noonan, whom we both like. She wrote this before the election. "Now if I know anything about the real America, you know, the real America is coming together. We're--" and the real America did come together. And it wasn't the one they thought was there. |
| 01; 38; 21; 19 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You've been tough on those pundits whose chief claim to fame is that they know something so special, that their predictions are more credible than the rest of us. George Will, Michael Barone, Dick Morris all predicted a landslide for Romney. Are any of them likely to pay for being wrong? |
| 01; 38; 39; 09 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | That's the why bookies are sort of morally preferable for pundits. The bookies have to pay. And I guess I have been heartened, I was heartened by at least the initial reaction in right wing pundit world, that some of them seemed shell-shocked, as opposed to being in denial and saying, the election, the win for the progressive side generally seemed to be so profound, that they were able to kind of move beyond what they would've preferred to say, which I think somehow this is all a fraud. Somehow it didn't really happen. So, we'll see if they pay, including Karl Rove with his consultant fees. |
| 01; 39; 14; 15 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You were candid over the three years of the Obama administration about his weaknesses, his failures and his flaws. But a few months ago, you wrote that you saw Obama improving and you thought he would be a better second term president. Why? |
| 01; 39; 27; 28 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Part of my argument is that everybody fails in the first term as president because it's too big a job. And so, you sort of reveal what the weakness is and what particular lack a president has. And we've seen some of those with President Obama. I think one way in which he'll certainly be different is that he knows who he is dealing with now. The first two years of the administration, he thought that they were going to be able to make sort of a split the loaf deal with the current Republican Party. And they weren't interested in that.  So I think he will have a firmer approach from the get-go. He now doesn't have to worry about reelection, as we all know. I think he's become more sophisticated as a judge of executive talent around him and just sort of knows what he is doing. You know, he spent four years making hard decisions, after no executive experience, essentially. So I think he has shown only growth that I've seen, rather than a regression. And I hope that continues. |
| 01; 40; 18; 14 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You have lived much of the last three years in China and you've spent a lot of time since I first knew you, in China. How do you think Obama's reelection is being seen there? |
| 01; 40; 29; 00 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Interestingly, they were appalled by his election by and large four years ago. Among other reasons, because he was not white. And they thought, "You know, how can you do this? We're used to dealing with these George W. Bush, you know, father and son figures, Nixon, Kissinger and all the rest." So there was some shock.  The Chinese have their preference would always be more of the same, whatever the American policy is. So they didn't like Mitt Romney because of this fairly crude anti-China threats, which he would never have carried out. They like the idea it's going to be a familiar team now with Obama.  And I think, interestingly, to telescope a long argument, the area of greatest continuity in U.S. foreign policy since the time of Nixon has been our dealings with China. Where, on the one hand, we think it's better if they grow than if they don't. On the other hand, we have all sorts of problems with them. I think that is the way Obama has pursued it and will keep pursuing it. So I think they actually are relieved to have a second term. |
| 01; 41; 18; 17 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | What do they want from us? |
| 01; 41; 20; 16 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | They want essentially a chance to develop. I-- |
| 01; 41; 27; 17 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | You mean develop economically? |
| 01; 41; 27; 17 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Develop economically. And just to sort of breathe. When I lived in Japan, I was quite alarmed, and remain so, about sort of the zero-sumness of many of Japan's economic ambitions, which sort of came out of American achievement. In China's case, I think it's different. It's a gigantic poor country where most people are still poor.  The per capita income is still, like, one-fifth what it is in the United States. A lot of really rich people, but still they have more farmers than we have people. And it's a giant challenge. And so I think what they want is it's better for them for the foreseeable future, for our lifetimes, for our children's lifetimes, that China just have a chance to kind of make people richer. And so they would like for the U.S. to basically give them space to do that. |
| 01; 42; 13; 26 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | What do we want from them? |
| 01; 42; 14; 29 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | We want them to become more liberal and responsible as they become richer. We want them not to destroy the world's environment, which they will do if other things being equal.  And so we want to work with them on avoiding environmental just destruction. We want them to continue bringing people from rural poverty to sort of urban working classness, which is what they've been doing. We want them to grow up in both international and domestic ways. Grow up internationally in having a foreign policy that's not just whatever's good for them commercially, which is what their foreign policy is now.  And to say, "Okay, you have to play a role in Iran and Syria or whatever, being responsible." Domestically, we want them to gain confidence so they don't have to have their foot on their people's neck. Most of the time in China you don't know the government's around. Just kind of a sort of state of chaos-- |
|  | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Really? |
|  | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | And, yeah. |
| 01; 43; 06; 24 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | I mean, not like Russia, the Soviet Union-- |
| 01; 43; 08; 12 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Oh, it's-- |
|  | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | --not that blanket-- |
| 01; 43; 09; 26 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | --entirely different. It's most of the time the areas the government cares about, the internet, democratic protest or whatever, Taiwan, Tibet, they're all over. When it doesn't involve that, you know, you can basically do what you want. You start a business, et cetera. So we want them to allow their people to have more a sort of liberal, normal life, as times goes on, which I-- and the government it's a country becoming more confident with a government that's still sort of nervous antique.  It's a Dick Cheney government with-- if not a Barack Obama, an FDR type nation behind it. Here's an illustration. Before the Olympics, the foreign ministry said, "We're going to have an authorized protest zone so that everybody can say," you know, the Beijing Olympics, four years ago, "we're going to show the world we can tolerate protest." When people applied to protest, they were all arrested. So there's parts of the government that say, "This would look good, to allow a protest." There's parts that say, "We can't tolerate this. We're going to arrest people." |
| 01; 44; 06; 00 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Did it strike you during the campaign, Jim, that neither Romney nor Obama mentioned human rights in China? |
| 01; 44; 13; 27 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | They didn't, which is part of the-- nobody mentioned climate change, they didn't mention the Supreme Court. There's all sorts of things. You could write 20 books on things that didn't come up in the campaign. On Obama's side, in a way, he didn't need to because his policy-- the Chinese know his policy is as it has been for the U.S., we want to work with China, but there's things we're not going to give up.  We're going to-- the president will meet the Dalai Lama, even though you hate that. We will send arms to-- sell arms to Taiwan, even though you view that as Casus belli, et cetera. So I think Obama could say, "Okay, I've had four years of a balanced approach." Romney, his currency-- bluster was sort of proxy for saying, you know, he would be blustery in all ways. |
| 01; 44; 56; 23 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Tough on China currency manipulation. First day in office, he would accuse them of-- bring them to the court of public opinion-- |
| 01; 45; 02; 25 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Which he would not do. We'll never know that for sure, but I tell you that for sure. |
| 01; 45; 06; 29 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | There was an interesting little ad that kept running over and over in the weeks leading up to this campaign, about China. Let me play it for you. |
|  | CHINESE LANGUAGE CAMPIAGN AD BEGINS |
| 01; 45; 17; 05 | NARRATOR: |
|  | Why do great nations fail? The Ancient Greeks…the Roman Empire…the British Empire…and the United States of America. They all make the same mistakes, turning their back on the principles that made them great. America tried to spend and tax itself out of a great recession. Enormous so-called “stimulus” spending, massive changes to healthcare, government takeovers of private industries and crushing debt. Of course, we owned most of their debt…so now they work for us. |
|  | CHINESE LANGUAGE CAMPIAGN AD BEGINS |
| 01; 46; 09; 12 | NARRATOR: |
|  | America can determine our own future, but only if we own it. For American independence, we must cut spending and waste. |
| 01; 46; 17; 21 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Unpack that for me. |
| 01; 46; 20; 06 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I actually love that ad. I first saw that ad two years ago when it was run in the 2010 midterms. I did an article at The Atlantic site calling it "The Wonderful Chinese Professor Ad." Here's what I loved about it. Number one, it's evident from minute, second one of that, it's not filmed in China 'cause these people just they're all-- and in fact, it was some junior college in California or someplace. Or maybe in northern Virginia suburbs. They advertise-- |
| 01; 46; 41; 27 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | What a world. |
| 01; 46; 43; 06 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | --American, because they just look so healthy and their teeth are not what Chinese people's teeth look like and all the rest. So it was Asian Americans, the audience who didn't really know how that was going to be used, and didn't understand the narrative. But the actor, who is the Chinese actor who was professor. Number two, I thought it was actually a skillful use of the foreign menace in this sense.  The professor is saying, "These empires rise and fall for their own reasons." He didn't say, "We push them over." He was saying, you know, they undid themselves. I disagree with his narrative about how we undid ourselves. I don't think health care would undo us. I don't think foreign debt would undo us. But I thought it was part of good side of the foreign menace tradition in our life of saying we should do better, as opposed to these foreign rats. You know, they're tricking us-- |
| 01; 47; 28; 17 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | That's what the ads that used to run many years ago against the Chinese menace, you know? |
| 01; 47; 33; 14 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Yeah, exactly-- |
|  | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | They're coming, their hoards are going to overtake America and appeal to people's fear. This doesn't appeal directly or explicitly to fear. |
| 01; 47; 40; 00 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Well, it ends with that of their chuckling. You know, now they work for us. Now, you know, they ask for jobs for us. And so, that final part you could say is sort of China menace bashing. But I thought it actually was a very interesting snapshot of the American psyche. Now, that ad was not about China. It was about America. |
| 01; 47; 58; 05 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Us. |
| 01; 47; 57; 14 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | And how feel we feel that we're-- this is the latest foe that's going to overtake us. |
| 01; 48; 03; 12 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Do the Chinese think America's in decline? |
| 01; 48; 06; 01 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Some of them do. Some of them follow the same rhetoric. And that feeling's more about China than about the U.S. So I think that there is-- |
| 01; 48; 13; 20 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Why? How so? |
| 01; 48; 14; 27 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | There is a confidence in what China has done the last 30 years, as there should be. That any family there, if it looks back 30 years, their prospects are unimaginably better off than they were 30 years ago, when they didn't have a refrigerator or any of that stuff. And so they're confident in that. There're tremendous opportunities. But there is tremendous cynicism in China, a tremendous dissatisfaction.  Their problems are worse than ours in every dimension, environmental, economic-- which is what I write about this book. Political legitimacy. There is more cynicism about the Chinese political system than we have about ours. And the contrast to the world's two great powers are changing their leadership November of 2012.  Everything about America is in the open, you know, to a fault. Everything about China is mysterious. You know, nobody knew the day before they started to do this process exactly who'd be in charge, how many people would be in charge, when it'd be announced, et cetera. So it's really a contrast-- |
| 01; 49; 12; 21 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | We took that off the Americans for Prosperity, the Koch brothers front group, off their website. Why would they be running this ad right it's an old ad, as you say, two years ago, running it again in 2012? |
| 01; 49; 24; 03 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | It was part of the narrative that started with the Tea Party that these worst problem for America is the national deficit. Now I think that is a problem in the long run for America. The real economic problem for right now is joblessness and inequality. And so, I think it was part of a Republican Tea Party narrative that the way the big menace to America was the deficit.  Therefore, deficit spenders, who they allege to be Democrats, you know, not talking about the Bush administration or anything. That is why it was essentially a Republican Tea Party inspired narrative that happened to produce what I view as an artistically very interesting ad. |
| 01; 50; 03; 03 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | Do we work for the Chinese? And if we even do to some extent, are they likely to use that to their advantage over us? |
| 01; 50; 12; 12 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | We, no, we don't work for them. When Japan was rising, its companies were head to head competitors with American companies. It was Toyota versus GM. It was Toshiba versus IBM, et cetera, et cetera down the line. Chinese companies are subcontractors for American brands. Every Apple product is made in China. Two weeks ago, I was seeing where they were made.  But of the $1,000 for an Apple computer, only about $80 or $90 stays in China. The rest is with Apple and with the screen makers and advertisers and retailers and Fed Ex and all the rest. And so, we have a trade deficit with China. The debt that the Chinese hold over |
|  | us actually they view as a weakness on our side for them, rather than us-- number one, it makes them hostage to the value of our dollar and to our financial markets.  If we're having a discussion in China, people would say, "What are we thinking, having all our savings in these U.S. treasury notes? You know, what if they default? What-- the interest, what if they have runaway inflation, et cetera, et cetera?" It's the imbalance between the two countries is a sign of imbalance in both of our systems.  We've been too debt dependent and too over consumptive. They have been too export dependent and they haven't lived as well as they should. A poor country is lending money to a rich country. That is odd and needs to change and will. |
| 01; 51; 29; 25 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | If you were having this conversation with President Obama, he might ask you, he might say-- "Jim, you say that more than two thirds of the new airports under construction today are being built in China. You call your book China Airborne. Why should I, as president, why should our people think about China building airports?" |
| 01; 51; 49; 28 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | I was using it as a proxy for the tech ambitions that China will need to ascend. The question I try to address in here is whether the miracle of the last 30 years in China, of going from being a peasant society to a Dickensian working class society, will it be able to take the next step, to becoming a truly modern society? Having their own Boeings, their own Apples, their own Googles, their own Mitsubishis, their own Mercedes.  And I argue that's going to be really hard for them. And there are three or four test case for it. Their ambition to become an aerospace power. Boeing is always our largest exporter. Aerospace is always our largest export industry. Are they going to be able to do that? Pharma is another one where they're trying hard. Info tech, things like Google.  So I look at all these test cases and I say, if they're going to be able to do this, it's going to have to become a different kind of country, with not so much censorship, with real universities, as opposed to these kind of diploma mills they have. And so, China's ambition to become, and they're going to have to reduce some of the military overhang and some of the security state. So if they can become a real rival to Boeing, if they can have a real rival to Google, they'll become a different kind of China in a way more threatening, but a way less threating 'cause a more sort of civilized country in the broadest sense. |
| 01; 53; 01; 20 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | So if you were sitting there with President Obama, and he asked you for, "What should I say about China in my State of the Union message," what advice would you give him? |
| 01; 53; 10; 28 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Say that we the relationship between America and China matters to the entire world because we'll either destroy the world's environment, or have some chance for saving it together. Or else, if we don't work together on this, there's no hope. The two most strongly growing economies in the world need to help the world continue to grow and deal with inequality.  And the stability and sort of decency of China as an international player is something only the United States is in a position to effect, if at all. It matters to our children if China-- how China uses its power. And so, the greatest stake we have the greatest outside our own borders, the greatest stake we have in the conditions for our children and grandchildren is our relationship with China. |
| 01; 53; 56; 29 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | So this then is a very timely and important book. "China Airborne" by James Fallows. Thank you very much for being with me. |
| 01; 54; 03; 06 | JAMES FALLOWS: |
|  | Thank you so much, Bill. |
| 01; 54; 19; 07 | BILL MOYERS: |
|  | That’s it for this week. Naomi Klein will join me next week. She's the author of the seminal book, "The Shock Doctrine," on the crisis of capitalism that we’re seeing play out today.    Meanwhile, at our website, BillMoyers.com, we asked some of our past guests for their quick visceral reaction to President Obama’s reelection and what it might mean for America. Andrew Bacevich, Simon Johnson and Barbara Ehrenreich are among those who contributed. Now it’s your turn. Read their entries and send us yours. That’s at BillMoyers.com.  I’ll see you there and I’ll see you here, next time. |
| 01; 54; 55; 07 | [Credits] |