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## The nation and world: A look forward at security concerns

by [Katie Glueck](#) and [Jordan Helton](#)

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What will Obama say about national security policy in his State of the Union?

Not much, said Gabriel Schoenfeld, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute.

“The lesson from Massachusetts is that voters are very upset with domestic policy, so I think Obama’s speech is going to be jobs, jobs, jobs,” Schoenfeld said. “Foreign policy and national security will be secondary.”

To the extent that the president does discuss security policy, the focus will be on Afghanistan, Iraq and counterterrorism, Schoenfeld said.

“He’s going to stress that we’re moving aggressively in Afghanistan, winding down the war in Iraq and tightening up counterterrorism procedures in the wake of the Christmas Day attack,” he said. “He’s going to put a positive spin on everything. He’s not going to call [Christmas Day] an intelligence failure, even though it clearly was.”

Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy at the libertarian Cato Institute, said he hopes Obama won’t neglect Afghanistan and Iraq.

“He’ll have a domestic focus with health care and things like that, but I think he should speak more about Afghanistan, where he has put a lot of his credibility on the line,” Preble said. “He’s substantially increased the US military presence there and has signaled a desire to increase the U.S. commitment there, even when he professes to be seeking to withdraw.”

With time constraints and a country that’s riled up about the economy and health care, any mention of national security issues will give insight into what’s motivating Obama’s national security agenda, Preble said.

“He’s going to have a limited amount of space for foreign policy,” he said. “The two, three or maybe—maybe—four things he talks about will be a clear sign in terms of what his priorities are.”

#### **On counterterrorism:**

“He’s going to put a positive spin on everything. He’s not going to call [the Christmas Day bomb attempt] an intelligence failure, even though it clearly was.”—Dr. Gabriel Schoenfeld, senior fellow at the Hudson Institute

“The American public has been a little fatigued by Iraq and Afghanistan. I think [President Barack Obama] doesn’t want to get too deep in the weeds...he’ll take a broader view.”--Malou Innocent, foreign policy analyst at the Cato Institute

#### **On Iran:**

“It would be very interesting if he does raise Iran. I think it’s possible, but his policies have collided with reality—the Iranians have rebuffed him at every turn—and now it seems like we’re at a dangerous dead end, so I’m not sure what he could say to try to extricate himself.”—Dr. Gabriel Schoenfeld

“From my own perspective, I don’t think Iran should be near the top of the list. We have 100,000 troops in Afghanistan and we’re still in Iraq. Those should be priorities until those missions are drawn to a close. I hope he’s not envisioning commitment in Iran, but if he does choose to talk about it, it would be a sign the administration has chosen to elevate that issue.”—Dr. Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy at the Cato Institute

### **Reporting from the Hill**

