

**“I knew right away: He will be our President”**

*For an Ambassador, Austria is the dream country to be assigned to, says Obama friend William Carlton.*

Interview with Ambassador Eacho  
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By Klaus Haemmerle

*William Carlton Eacho, 58*

*William C. Eacho comes from Washington [D.C.], is married and has three sons. He studied law and economics at Duke University in North Carolina and was a successful businessman. He generously supported Obama's election campaign.*

**Lauterach. (Vorarlberger Nachrichten VN)**

Yesterday, U.S. Ambassador William Carlton (58) took a break from skiing in Zürs and visited Governor Markus Wallner. With VN he talked about his friendship with President Barack Obama, about U.S. politics, Austria, and his job.

*VN: Mr. Ambassador, during the Bush presidency the U.S. was also not very popular here. Has this changed?*

Eacho: With older people, the U.S. has maintained its positive image. They don't forget things like the Marshall Plan. We increasingly try to reach young people through social media. We can say: Everybody likes President Obama.

*VN: Is Obama's popularity strong enough so that he will be re-elected?*

Eacho: I think so. The main factor is the economy which is gaining momentum again. When choosing a president, the Americans only look at the economy.

*VN: How close are you with the President?*

Eacho: Very close. I met him for the first time five years ago. He hadn't decided yet on a candidacy. We talked for about an hour. Just as you and I are doing right now. I knew right away: He will be our new President. After that I supported him wherever I could, introduced him to various groups and people.

*VN: What is it that you value so much in him?*

Eacho: He is warm-hearted, he is authentic, and he is never just playing a role. He has made the U.S. a partner of international organizations again.

*VN: How important is small Austria to the U.S.?*

Eacho: In the U.S.' view Austria plays a very important role as a bridge builder to the Balkan states. In Kosovo, the biggest non-NATO contingent is from Austria, the same in Bosnia. Austria is being recognized by these countries – not just for historical reasons. Because of its neutrality, Austria enjoys greater respect than a country affiliated with a bloc.

*VN: In a historical context, Austria has not always been neutral, especially concerning the Balkan...*

Eacho: That may be correct. However, there are a lot of Serbs living in the Vienna of today and at home Serbs can say that they have families in Vienna. In addition, Austria is one of the leading European countries which support the Serbian candidacy to the EU.

*VN: Are there any other similarities between the U.S. and Austria?*

Eacho: On the key global issues, Austria and the U.S. share the same opinion. For example, Austria supports the U.S. concerning sanctions against Iran. Nor do Austria and we want another nuclear power. This is another aspect where neutral Austria is willing to step up and tell Iran: you are not right, don't do that. The same applies to Syria, where Austria also took a clear position.

*VN: How did you become Ambassador to Austria?*

This was Barack Obama's idea. I had known Austria as a tourist. After talking it through with my wife, we accepted. For an ambassador, Austria is a dream country to be assigned to.

*VN: What do you think about Vorarlberg?*

Eacho: A great place for skiing. Bregenz is a beautiful capital.

*Picture: Praises Austria as reliable partner of the U.S.: Ambassador William C. Eacho, at present staying in Vorarlberg.*