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#Afghanistan #China #JoeBiden

Victor Davis Hanson | Afghanistan and America's Decline

Sep 9, 2021

In this Direct interview, John is joined by Victor Davis Hanson, Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution. Dr. Hanson addresses Biden's role in the Afghanistan crisis, increased tensions between China and the US, and the future of the US-Australia relationship. They also unpack the authoritarianism of woke politics, the mounting resistance against critical race theory in the West, and discuss Victor's upcoming book, *The Dying Citizen* (October 2021).

Victor Davis Hanson is an American classicist, military historian, columnist, and farmer. He has been a commentator on contemporary politics for the *National Review* and *The Washington Times* and is currently the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution.

In addition to writing hundreds of articles, book reviews and newspaper editorials, Hanson is also the author of twenty-four books. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and was a presidential appointee in 2007-08 on the American Battle Monuments Commission.

#Afghanistan #China #JoeBiden #Wokeness

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Conversations feature John Anderson, former Deputy Prime Minister of Australia, interviewing the world's foremost thought leaders about today's pressing social, cultural and political issues.

John believes proper, robust dialogue is necessary if we are to maintain our social strength and cohesion. As he puts it; "You cannot get good public policy out of a bad public debate."

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transcripts

he had followed the trump plan and he had used air power to make the taliban

0:05

comply i don't think we'd be in this situation but he didn't want to he wanted to tell the world and the nation

0:11

on the anniversary of 9 11 that he was joe biden from scranton

0:21

victor davis hanson i'm delighted to say has been with us before and has agreed to come on again he's the martin and ellie

0:28

anderson senior fellow in residence in classics and military history at the hoover institution at stanford

0:34

university in california he served in a lot of very prestigious academic posts

0:41

he's a historian of both ancient and modern history with a special emphasis on the history of warfare particularly

0:48

fascinating on ancient warfare but also world war ii and how what should have been a series

0:54

no more than a series of ugly border disputes turned into the horrors of the second world war

1:00

because people in germany and then later in japan thought the west wouldn't stand up for

1:05

itself he has a unique ability of being able to bring a deep and wide well of historical

1:12

learning to bear on the issues and the events of our time he's one of america's most sought after

1:17

commentators and i'm very keen to talk to him today about what afghanistan really means i

1:26

think you'll find this extremely interesting more than interesting in fact extremely important for us in these

1:32

rather worrying times well victor thank you so very much for

1:38

being with us these are very sobering times indeed i think globally

1:44

and the events surrounding afghanistan raise really big questions in australia at

1:49

least and i think globally about what it means for america what it means for america's

1:55

global leadership in the context of a liberal democratic order that we've talked about in the past that people

2:01

have talked about but also what it means for america's enemies and america's allies australia being one

2:08

of them now you recently described the withdrawal from afghanistan as and i

2:14

quote the worst american diplomatic military and strategic humiliation of the last 50

2:21

years president biden's decision to withdraw from afghanistan appears to have been

2:27

the previous president's plan as well was this policy in itself destined to

2:34

result in tragedy or do its disastrous consequences lie mostly in how the

2:39

current administration handled it those are a lot of questions i'll try to answer them in the order that you you

2:45

pose them john i think there's a great worry abroad and indeed in the united states whether the kabul disaster

2:52

reflects an ongoing decline in america and i don't mean that materially we have the

2:58

greatest universities we have the greatest military we have the most sophisticated technology

3:06

etc etc but we're in the middle of a woke revolution

3:11

we have regressed on racial relations by 50 years we have a new generation that questions

3:18

the founding date of america the constitution itself we don't have a border on the south it

3:24

doesn't exist anymore two million are scheduled to walk across with complete legal immunity there's a growing sense

3:30

that the law is applied uh on ideological grounds we have a politicized military so

3:37

there's a lot of us in this country that feel that this is a reflection of a larger problem and then there's others

3:43

who feel that given what i just said we have so many advantages that this is

3:49

this will be dealt with like the saigon uh 1975 disaster in which we reconstituted the military and came back

3:55

in the gulf war etc and that the verdict is out on that as far as the allies though that you pose

4:02

look there were three and a half times more european allies in afghanistan

4:08

than there were americans and we were the ones that brought them in there not they they didn't say after 9

4:14

11 or something we want to we said come and join us we even almost jawboned them into saying that this was

4:21

a nato demand and then other non-nato members joined as well as you know

4:26

and so to leave them hanging there without air support which they relied on without transportation

4:34

abilities and to do so abruptly and to give up magnum air force

4:40

in the middle of the night there's some controversy about the staggering amount of weaponry left

4:46

whether it was 50 billion or 80 if you include the training and the cost associated with having

4:52

afghans used it but if we were to use the larger figure john we're talking

4:58

about eighty percent of all the money that we've given israel since the founding of

5:03

the jewish state we're talking enough to build or deploy 1000 f-35s

5:10

at 90 million 85 million a piece we're talking about seven of these new gerald ford

5:16

aircraft carriers so this was an underestimated and underappreciated disaster in that sense alone not to

5:22

mention it's going to be a jihadist arms mark for the next generation as

5:28

well as a terrorist haven and so that that is disturbing but as your final question is

5:35

the geo strategic implications of this i think you're already seeing that in some of the japanese media excuse me the chinese

5:42

media they're talking as if it's a foregone conclusion not

5:49

when they would take over taiwan not if they would but when and they're telling the taiwanese

5:54

don't suffer the fate of the afghans you're not under any defense umbrella with the united states don't laugh the

6:00

russians are i think will be very tough on the baltic states the frontline nato states and breakaway republics

6:08

the ball is in their court north korea has announced that they may start retesting iran has been very muscular so

6:16

the the abandonment of deterrence is very easy but the creation

6:22

and maintenance is very hard so we've got to have to it won't do just to say we're here for you we're going to

6:28

have to in the future demonstrably show that at some risk and then finally

6:35

whose policy was that you could make the argument that after 20 years and this 2 trillion dollars

6:43

the idea had morphed from eliminate the terrorist haven pay back the architects of 911

6:51

uh in retaliatory fashion make sure that terrorists don't use it at base into

6:57

well we can't accomplishment accomplish that unless we rebuild it as a constitutional government

7:03

and that was the pre-modern state and so after 20 years there was a lot of dissimulation and lies about the

7:08

progress there was no progress in some ways superficially there were in the cities on the planes but

7:15

half the country and two-thirds of the population of territory and two-thirds of the population was not on board and

7:21

so donald trump decided that he was going to withdraw down from 10 000 to zero and then as he started to

7:28

get down and the intelligence said this is very stupid you can't give up the biggest air

7:34

force base in central asia and you won't be able to evacuate people orderly

7:39

and we've only lost we haven't lost one soldier in 12 months and now it's been 18 until the recent

7:47

disaster so why not just keep a residual forces diagram provide

7:52

air support and then look and look at the situation in the next few months if they

7:59

uh partnership with us and they respect the integrity of the afghan

8:05

national government which i think there would be very little chance of that without coercion on our part then stop

8:10

it don't i mean accelerate the withdrawal if not uh stop the withdrawal and perhaps leave a

8:17

residual air force base that was the trump policy and the proof of the pudding is in the eating when Biden came

8:23

in he reversed that and the result was what we had if he had followed the trump plan and he had used

8:31

air power to make the taliban comply i don't think we'd be in this situation but he didn't want to he wanted to tell

8:38

the world and the nation on the anniversary of 9 11 that he was joel Biden from Scranton he's been

8:44

underestimated in his whole life and he was he was the real progressive that got us out of Afghanistan

8:50

hard to know where to begin to unpack all of this now you paint a picture of America if you like culturally divided

8:56

and very uncertain of its role feeding into this

9:02

how widespread would be the concern across the political divides in america about
9:08

the way this has been handled what has it done to the prestige and the standing of the
regime in america in your view

9:18

well i mean if we were to look at polls and with the exception of two or three polls polling
operations they seem to be

9:25

center left and as we learned from 2016 they were radically off they all show a dramatic

9:30

drop in the president's popularity from 10 to 15 points i think even the usa

9:36

today had him down at 41 or 42 and so he's the problem

9:42

that he had had was that on all of these progressive agendas the the open border at a
time of when

9:49

two million are scheduled to come across without vaccinations or testing was only

9:54

polling about 35 hardcore leftists when you look at the idea that we're going to raise the

10:00

price of energy or shut down pipelines or put ammo off the table that had only about 45
approval so he

10:10

he he was running he was maintaining his 50 approval on the idea that he doesn't tweet
and he's not on truth like donald

10:16

trump and we needed a break from him and he was old joel Biden from Scranton even
though he was a vessel for hard left but

10:23

now in this shock and this humiliation and the deaths of 13 Americans and the anger

10:29

of our allies they have put into view two things number one all of these

10:35

previous issues that were not popular and two the only strength that Joe Biden had was
he was

10:42

supposed to be friendly and nice but he's in some ways

10:47

cognitively challenged and one of the manifestations of that of that dilemma is that when
he's asked

10:53

questions he gets rude or he's barks or he makes fun of people or he goes off on

10:59

tangents or he says he says things that aren't true just if you have a passport just go to
the airport they'll let you in that's

11:05

not true the military told me i had to do this they did not so

11:11

his only uh ace in the hole so to speak the idea that personally

11:17

he was not a donald trump seems to be eroding with this latest disaster and it's i shouldn't say a

11:23

disaster that's that underestimates the effect of it it's so much more

11:30

deleterious to america and its foreign policy its image its security

11:35

responsibility then all of the other issues i just mentioned put together those were manageable but this is not

11:41

manageable so the question that immediately occurs to me

11:47

uh well there are all sorts of other issues that that are worth teasing out for a moment understandably after 20

11:52

years a lot of people would say and the poll suggests this right across the western world time to get out but in

11:58

reality how long have the americans had a serious force in south korea is it 70 years

12:04

and i think it's 70 000 people more than we have in the entire australian defense force and of course for the first

12:12

20 years people said it was a failure because the south korean government was run by a dictatorship and it would never

12:17

democratize and yes it did for everything from samsung to hyundai

12:22

is responsible it's a it's an artifact or it's a dividend i should say of americans on

12:29

the 38th parallel and in the case of afghanistan we really haven't waged a war there since 2015 we've been support

12:36

we've had tragically about 10 people killed a year but last year we had nobody there was about 50 million dollars a day

12:43

that time were running almost a 30 trillion dollar debt that was a consideration so there was a consensus

12:49

that this government is going to make it it's going to have to

12:55

you know it's do or die within a very short period but the difference again between the trump agenda and the pompeo

13:01

agenda was we're not pulling out air support we're not pulling out a background we're going to station

13:07

we're going to solidify and pause at 3000 actually it was 3 500 troops and that will give a

13:15

wait-and-see attitude and see what the taliban is going to do there was a sense i think by some of the americans

13:22

in diplomacy in the pentagon that we were westernizing each year a number

13:28

of people who were born after 2001 that never had experienced the taliban and

13:33

those numbers and the popular culture and the westernization was

13:38

starting to create an alternate culture in the cities maybe as i said a third of the

13:44

population that had the same effect in some of the gulf states and therefore for

13:50

the radical islamists who haven't taken over saudi arabia or kuwait or gutter

13:55

this same phenomenon would happen uh and that may even happen in iraq i'm very dubious because afghanistan

14:02

unlike the arab countries did not have a lot of source of national wealth or some experience in a post-industrial

14:08

world the interesting that the president appears

14:14

to us in australia to have been claiming well this was trump's policy i had to follow through that sounded very hollow

14:20

to us because one of the other things that's received a great deal of attention was the rapidity with which he overturned

14:26

everything that he didn't like that trump had done it sounded very hollow to say i'm just continuing what trump set

14:33

up that's exactly right uh he canceled the border wall he we had

14:39

no illegal aliens essentially coming across the border he stopped that we were we were pumping three million

14:46

more barrels of oil we were the largest oil producer natural gas producer in the world

14:51

he stopped the anwar he stopped federal dan war oil field in alaska he stopped the keystone

14:58

pipeline he told frackers that their days were numbered he stopped all new federal leases of fossil fuels

15:04

so yeah i mean he he was quite willing and able and happy to suspend all the

15:10

trump initiatives he's going to do another one with this massive tax increase but so that was just

15:16

that was just uh a pretense the fact of the matter was is the trump

15:22

plan at some point would require joe biden to use force against the taliban now the reason it

15:28

didn't require donald trump to do it because he killed al-baghdadi he killed seoul romani he bombed the crap out of

15:35

isis he had warned around he was going to respond and he had created deterrence and they

15:41

knew that if they did that he would he dropped the mother of all bombs on them a few years ago but they didn't

15:46

know whether joe biden would do that they had suspicions that he would not and he confirmed them and so they

15:53

accelerated their aggression more that he did not retaliate to it

15:58

it does uh look very chaotic i have to say the more you look at it uh whether

16:04

as you say it was 80 of what's been spent on helping the state of israel or however

16:09

much it is it now appears that the taliban have control of more black

16:15

hawk helicopters than most countries have in their entire air forces including australia

16:22

it looks as though there's some 350 000 assault weapons that have been left

16:27

behind it seems that the missile capacity 600 600 000

16:33

75 000 vehicles these are five million dollar mraps they're armed humvees they're

16:39

armed vehicles far more than your country has in its military so a lot of people said if you

16:45

were going to pull out and you had no confidence anyway then why not just evacuate these weapons to

16:52

our allies and give it to them if we're you know in that part of the world or and it would make

16:57

so a lot of the anger is that we're harder on our allies than we are in our enemies

17:03

as to rephrase you know the the dictator cell he said he used to say roma his

17:09

rome under sula was no better friend no worse enemy where there's no worse friend and no better enemy than

17:15

the united states in the views of our enemies and so now they have hostages they have planes

17:21

full of our friends and some americans on the tarmac and they're not releasing them

17:28

so if we if joe biden thought that by giving him anywhere from 75 to 85

17:34

billion to the taliban that that was going to satiate them and then they wouldn't ask

17:39

for more it just made them more hungry for bribes and so i think for the next few years we're going to have a

17:46

bold bergdahl situation which were humiliated and american pops up

17:51

kandahar american pops up on the border with pakistan and then we're told on a video that he wants to

17:58

be released and there's going to be so many billions so many concessions and this is

18:03

going to go on and on until we have somebody that says stop it or that we retaliate we're going to have

18:08

to do something at some at time to restore deterrence or our allies will have to make the necessary adjustments

18:15

and already as you know well far better than i do there are people in taiwan in south korea in japan in the

18:23

philippines and i do assume that in australia together as well who are saying you know what

18:29

we're right on the cusp of chinese military power and they make no

18:35

they're not subtle about their use of it and they come to us and they say to us all the time we're the next economic

18:41

juggernaut we're on the rise the united states is on decline they're very dangerous people because of their radically unpredictable

18:48

popular culture they go back on their word they'll never protect you

18:54

if you want to do business with us and join us then and we're going to be pretty much uh not very critical of your own

19:00

government we just care about business and you have to be on our side and and provide feel to you toward us and keep

19:06

your mouth shut about our internal affairs that's their message so if we can't say to our friends that

19:11

are democracies and constitutional republics we're here for you and we have far more

19:17

military power than china does and we're going to use it to protect you and we're your partners then then we're

19:24

nothing we're nothing we're there's nothing left of the western alliance nato ceases to exist

19:31

so ironic that the president who was uncouth and crass and we were told by the adults in the

19:37

room had unfairly jawboned nato succeeded in getting them to invest 100 million

19:43

dollars more in their defense budget and up the readiness of nato powers as much as they

19:49

didn't like to do that and the person who said that he was going to reach out to nato is all for now destroyed the alliance by

19:56

humiliating it and leaving it vulnerable on a country that would that the united states ask it to join in with

20:04

yeah you so you paint a very concerning picture um it's worth going back and thinking about

20:10

the history of uh america you know isolationists during the 30s

20:15

stung massively by pearl harbor of course rose to the occasion in an extraordinary

20:22

way and then after the war

20:27

behaved with extraordinary nobility much of the world as we know it today the the

20:32

decades of prosperity until recently expanding democracy and freedoms and several

20:38

has genesis in the way america behaved after the war and i think it's very easy to forget it's 13 billion dollars it

20:44

sounds like breakfast money today but for the marshall plan to reconstruct europe europe would not not have become what it

20:51

is uh you know in 1948 it was the worst mess than it had been in 1945 uh economically and in terms of

20:58

deprivation and poverty and hunger then you had they're very enlightened approach towards japan

21:03

you've mentioned south korea you know an authoritarian regime and an ugly one but america gently you know encouraging it

21:11

in a whole heap of ways to move towards democracy you could say some of the things about taiwan a very enlightened

21:17

approach not to say that america's got everything right in the past but that um it's easy

21:23

to forget and it's important to understand how important that leadership has has been

21:30

and what's the world going to look like without it is there any appetite in america to say

21:36

look you know we can't abandon our post as as the free world's leader

21:42

i'm very worried about that because traditionally american suspicion of

21:48

a international role political military economic came from the left

21:54

and their argument was at our birth we were a toxic country a hyper-capitalist country

22:00

we lacked the refinement of europe we're a bull in the china shop and the sophisticated europeans for example

22:08

have to you know be careful about us and therefore we don't have any business being in korea or vietnam or the gulf or

22:16

whatever it was but what's new is that there is a different group

22:21

of conservatives now and some of their complaints are warranted but their

22:26

mantra has joined the left in this way they don't like each other obviously but

22:32

the conservative mega people say well we paid

22:38

30 or 40 percent of the nato budget we were there from the berlin air wall left we

22:44

we put our cities under the nuclear exposure to protect europe

22:49

we rebuilt japan we had asymmetrical trade that we ran up and yet when we look abroad

22:56

there was all of this anti-americanism there was all this sort of british idea that they were

23:02

athenian philosophers that had to guide us the roman unthinking legions and so there was a lot there's a lot of

23:08

bitterness in this country that the post-war order led to the de-industrialization

23:15

of the interior of the united states because we were willing to uh put up with asymmetrical trade

23:24

and other asymmetries for the greater good of the world order i can just tell you that i lived in greece three years

23:30

as a classical student in graduate school and it was very frustrating in the 70s

23:36

especially uh to be in greece that was under the american nuclear umbrella then and had

23:43

not ended up like albania and bulgaria that were backward under communism or

23:48

eastern europe in general and we were protecting greece and

23:53

we had had almost open borders with greeks were migrating to the united states we were pouring in military and

23:59

economic aid we stopped communism in the 48 47-48 war and yet i lived

24:05

in an area of elysia district near the harry truman statue

24:11

and the american embassy and almost every month somebody cut his head off there were horrible anti-american

24:17

exo nato get out of nato and all this stuff and so the result of all the years of

24:23

that or a lot of people felt well if they want us out at some point we're going to give them their wish and

24:29

i think that trump came along and said i'm going to give everybody their wish and then now we're seeing europe kind of

24:34

shocked what i'm getting at is that i know i don't want to pay a pessimistic picture

24:40

i think there's going to be some good that comes out of this because i think a lot of europeans are going to say

24:46

we've got to step up to the bat everybody is and we want to be not your dependent but your partner and we can't

24:52

be your partner unless we spend a commiserate amount of gdp and defense as you do won't be the

24:58

same of course in dollars because given the asymmetries in the economies but if we're germans and we really feel

25:05

there is such a thing as the west we have 80 million people it just won't do any more for you to spend four

25:11

percent on gdp with two big oceans on your borders and for us right in the middle of europe to

25:17

spend 1.6 and refuse to spend any more that's not a situation that would be

25:22

tenable so hopefully people will say either well the europe's got to have their own defense

25:28

forces to work in tandem with the united states or we all have to [Music]

25:34

come to some type of share sharing that makes us all proportionally spend the same amount on defense and i

25:41

think that would be a welcome development but that's something that for the long term

25:48

right now short term the american government has to restore deterrence

25:53

and it will not be restored by reassuring the australians or the japan japanese or the south koreans we're here with you

26:00

don't worry it's going to have to be tangible and it's going to have to be material it's going to have to say you

26:05

know what we don't care whether it's iran if iran goes and tries to attack israel

26:12

or that that chinese start shooting down taiwanese jets or whatever it is we're going to

26:18

act we're going to react and we're going to act disproportionately and

26:23

we'll see if this administration is capable the problem is that it's very thin

26:28

that people are very critical of mr blinken and mr sullivan

26:33

and secretary austin chief of staff millie joe Biden

26:40

but when you look at the people who would replace them camella harris or some of the other people who've been

26:45

very vocal in the military or in their defense they're even further to the left

26:51

and further uh i guess with a with a progressive woke

26:56

agenda which also has an element in foreign policy so this is what's

27:02

i think we're going to see the biggest if i could use that taboo word

27:08

that we've seen in america since the 2010 uh midterms i think the republicans if

27:14

things go as they are now could pick up 60 or 70 seats in the house i think they could win back the senate by two seats

27:22

and i think they're going to be in a position to have a lot of power over who's president

27:27

here in our country there's serious doubts after the press conferences that followed from the kabul disaster whether

27:35

joe Biden is cognitively up to the job at 78 given his medical history i think

27:41

a lot of people feel that if it were not for the inexperienced kamala harris but if he

27:47

had a you know a sober judicious experienced vice president there'd be a move within his

27:53

own party so these are really date we've never had that before where there were people
27:59
openly in both parties worried about joe biden what he says because he says things that
28:04
are incoherent and we have foreign leaders that we know go back and say i don't know
what he was
28:10
talking about he seemed confused and so
28:15
um this is very it's a very dangerous time and when you put all this in the context
28:22
of covet and these new strains and the damage it's doing to the western economy
28:28
and the pretty flagrant involvement in a re-engineered or engineered virus may be
28:34
inadvertently let out but the evidence increasingly points to the virology lab in particular
28:41
and in general a type of research by the chinese government that was very dangerous
28:46
and this is the this is the benefit of the doubt scenario where the chinese military was
not involved in bio-weaponry research we don't have
28:53
proof of that yet but there's suspicion but when you put that in the context and the
deterrent factor that that provides
28:59
the world by saying oh we wouldn't want this to happen again and look what the
damage it did to the
29:05
west we're in very it's time i think for the united states to say you know what
29:11
we've just got to stop all these superfluous ideologies and and agendas and get back to
we're all
29:18
americans and we're living in a very very dangerous time and our very existence is at
stake and the same goes
29:25
through of our western partners well on that very theme our pre-eminent
29:31
foreign affairs writer in australia greg sheridan who's a foreign affairs writer at the
australian newspaper
29:37
posited that biden's humiliation
29:42
and the deep concern in america at the way in which he's handled this and his own
29:48
well there's no other way of putting it a cognitive uh imagery i suppose you could say or

29:55

concerns about his cognitive capacity means that he may be more beholden to

30:01

his work base than ever and their great concern at the moment of course is climate change

30:08

and glasgow's coming up and he posits that in the same way that obama this is a

30:15

very australian perspective turned a blind eye to what was happening

30:20

in the south china seas the you know tarmacking and concreting over of atolls

30:26

and establishment of aircraft bases and what have you militarization of the china sea

30:32

obama was inclined president obama turned a blind eye in kept quiet because of promises in

30:39

inverted commas about action on climate change now the argument here is that what will happen in glasgow is that the chinese

30:46

will offer something in return for america

30:51

backing off on its uh unlawful and combative attitude as the

30:56

chinese have it towards the authoritarianism i think that's a very astute analysis there's elements that i

31:03

think are even in some ways more complex and therefore disturbing but i

31:08

would just say it first in in remark to that scenario uh

31:15

i think that people in the united states would then add it's not just climate change that they feel that

31:21

economically uh there are people especially in the high-tech industry in

31:27

wall street corporations that are woke that feel that uh the the Biden

31:33

administration should stop the trump economic policies toward china and

31:39

reopen it and in exchange for that we should uh agree to their demands that

31:46

we shouldn't be so critical of them or we shouldn't be so defensive about our own allies

31:53

toward them but i think more particularly where Biden

31:58

differs from obama not that the results won't be the same but they do differ joe biden made a faustian bargain with

32:06

the hard left and after the democratic primaries it was very clear that camilla harris had

32:11

zero support pete badashik was a terrible candidate cory booker was a terrible candidate

32:17

bernie sanders could not win again he was not nearly as successful as his first try elizabeth warren did not was

32:24

not sick all of them were too far left there were no moderates so joe biden

32:30

basically should not have run he was told by barack obama quote unquote joe

32:35

you don't have to do this he did this and in exchange they said to him we will stick by you and bring the

32:42

20 or 30 percent of the hard left and then you will bring in the independent

32:47

voter who is tired of the trump tweeting and the controversies that surround him

32:52

some of them most of them are many of them created by the media and then when you get into power however

32:59

you've got to enact the green so there was a formal agreement the problem with obama was that

33:06

he wasn't beholden to anybody he had a very different idea from the beginning

33:12

and his idea was that it was almost ornery punitive toward america whose

33:19

uh role in the world he was very suspicious of its history he was suspicious of take

33:24

the middle east he really did want to empower iran hezbollah the shia

33:30

persian minority and say you know what maybe the way to pay back our so-called pro-american

33:36

sunni arab friends the wealthy people in the gulf is to have a balance of power and we'll just

33:42

see if they like that and then i think as far as china went the spratly islands and all that he was telling a lot of our

33:48

allies you know your western capitalist democratic allies and you have inequality you

33:55

haven't addressed and all of this stuff and maybe you should just uh

34:00

take a deep breath and and start to deal with giants if you like that if we're friendly with china so it was a it was

34:06

almost a triangulation away from our our traditional allies as he did in the middle east and also with china

34:13

and uh the irony and the tragedy of all this is that donald trump saw that somebody without

34:20

political experience and he came in to restore our traditional support for israel or

34:26

antagonism to the theocracy our traditional support for australia the philippines japan taiwan south korea

34:33

korea to stand up to north korea to stand up to china but the problem was that

34:39

without experience in politics he first of all didn't have people he could draw on because the bipartisan foreign

34:46

relations establishment distrusted him and second people were so angry that they felt the

34:53

left had controlled the political discourse they wanted somebody to fire back but trump

34:58

when he fired back he was he was firing at a media atmosphere that there was no way of winning anybody over so whether

35:06

it was russian collusion or the the lies about hunters biden's

35:12

laptop being russian disinformation the media and the intelligence

35:17

military complex could he was a voice in the wilderness and he

35:23

made it worse the more unjustly he was treated the angrier he got

35:28

and you know it was a tragic it was a tragic figure because he did a lot of good and if people had just said he's

35:34

eccentric and prone to be a little off but we in the opposition and we in the media and we in wall street we and

35:41

they are going to treat him like we did you know george h.w bush or a regular opponent they didn't they wanted to

35:47

destroy him and he uh he was not able to get a second term if

35:53

he was president right now for all we would know what would be like joan he would be

35:58

detering our enemies he would be helping the countries we talked about there

36:04

would be people within those countries saying they don't like him they don't like his attitude we would

36:11

prefer joe biden had won the election but they would deep down the side feel they were safer

36:17

and that the west was stronger and people would be concentrating on the

36:23

latest third impeachment fourth impeachment fifth impeachment that's and that's tragedy that's the way it was

36:31

to tease out something else that biden said in one of his conferences as i understood it

36:37

and this is where i think you're painting a picture of of of the right make america great you know

36:44

we're not appreciated internationally we should look after america first

36:49

teaming up with the progressives who once cared about global leadership but are now

36:54

focused on their work issues biden said that our days of um

37:01

if you like in trying to encourage others to drop authoritarianism and open up freedoms

37:09

and so forth are over i mention this because the you know

37:14

the the idea of getting out of afghanistan before the 20th anniversary of 9 11

37:19

takes it back to its genesis as a matter of

37:26

small moment i suppose i was actually acting prime minister of australia when 9 11 happened our prime minister was in

37:31

washington he was only a mile from where the plane flew into the pentagon

37:37

now of course a trip to anzas for the first time and it's now then 50 years now 70 year history

37:44

along with everyone else we agreed that afghanistan was a problem it was training ground

37:50

central we had to be involved then came iraq and then the second engagement in

37:57

afghanistan and i had the opportunity to interact with then president george bush about all this

38:03

when he came to australia in 2003 uh 4 4.

38:09

and two things struck me one was something our prime minister talked about which was that the 9 11

38:16

attacks galvanized the american people it completely changed their attitude there was a very

38:24

strong reaction that we must secure the safety of our homeland and you could that was very strong in president george

38:31

bush he cared about his nation but there was something else when we talked about

38:37

better governance for the people of iraq around the cabinet table without breaking confidential confidentiality

38:43

which i still can't do all these years down the road and a subsequent conversation at lunch um you can't fake george bush's genuine

38:51

concern that those people enjoy a better way of life he was deeply

38:56

committed to that perhaps it was a little naive i can put it that way i remember

39:04

talking to one of colonel gaddafi's sons when he was in australia and i asked him could a

39:09

believing serious islamists embrace

39:15

democracy and he said no because we don't really believe in democracy we believe in theocracy

39:22

and so perhaps there was a an element of not understanding that in the american approach at the

39:28

time but what strikes me about it is that that sort of fierce pro-americanism america has been

39:35

stung we saw it after vietnam uh produced a coming together of the nation

39:40

a unity that's dissipated unbelievably can it be brought back the second thing is

39:46

there was that deep well-motivated concern for people who were living in horrific circumstances with no freedom

39:54

has that now been washed out as well can either be recovered i think they're cyclical remember that george bush ran

40:02

in 2000 as a quasi

40:08

i don't want to say isolationist but he said i'm not a nation builder and i'm not going to do what bill clinton did

40:14

and go into the balkans and you know oversee every bomb that was

40:21

dropped and put all these restrictions on the military and then stay in there and stay in there and stay in there what

40:27

he was saying is we've been there six or seven years and we're trying to rebuild uh

40:33

an impossible yugoslavia and then he you're absolutely right he the circumstances changed where he said

40:41

after 9 11 that this tit for tat cruise missile for that for

40:46

terrorist acts uss cole tanzania's embassy we've got to stop that

40:52

this is an existential threat we're going to go in there and we're going to destroy the taliban and saddam hussein's

40:59

support for terrorists the world over but we're not going to leave this time we're going to alter the conditions so

41:05

they can't reappear and then we hope that that will be a model for other countries to join us

41:11

and that uh you can make the argument that after

41:17

2015 that was a viable project in afghanistan

41:22

had the military and the government explained it but it became

41:27

you know whoever the president was in everybody in the opposition said well we got to get out of afghanistan

41:33

trump actually did change and so did obama obama wanted to get out and they said
41:38

this is what's going to happen and he stopped and then trump wanted to get out and he didn't

41:44

joe biden did not follow that paradigm iraq i think for all of the tragedies of iraq

41:52

there is still a government there and they have an election and it's got some hope i didn't think i'd say that after

41:58

the isis takeover but uh so these are cyclical and

42:03

i think the view of all of these afghan people clinging to the plane it

42:09

at a time when people in america are saying 1776 is not the date of our founding or

42:16

this was flawed at the beginning and we see people who don't even know us that are clinging on a wheel

42:22

risking sure death to come to this country or two million people or walking a thousand miles to come here

42:28

and shook people up and then when they saw that scene in kabul of women who were saying we we've never worn a

42:35

brick in our life i'm 18 now i'm going to have to wear one and

42:40

shooting people already and this is just the beginning as soon as the the period is clear to

42:45

the taliban that we will not be retaliating and not be punitively striking them

42:51

they're going to start to be emboldened and really start killing people so i think that'll have an effect just like

42:56

911 did just like all americans are very fickle fluid uh malleable in that sense and uh

43:04

because we're such a radical democracy and that can be good and bad but i i think there'll be a return to the idea

43:10

that we're not america if we just leave people high and dry after the vietnam war there was so such

43:18

humiliation in the united states in 1975 and so many

43:23

stories about fragging and drug use and racial hostility within the military the

43:28

military then really tried to rebuild it from the ground up and they got together with

43:34

private enterprise and defense contractors they got they were at the cutting edge of the

43:39

computer revolution and we went into the first gulf war as you remember in 1991

43:46

and that military performed superbly we didn't have to go all the way over there but we chose to

43:53

in 1991 to stop saddam hussein's annexation of kuwait

43:58

and so a lot of this depends on the

44:03

this i know it sounds trite but the success of the implementation the operation the great general matthew ridgeway who

44:10

saved korea had been quoted variously that there's only one thing worse than being in a bad

44:16

war and that's losing it and so as as bleak as afghanistan was

44:22

there were there was a way to keep it alive on the theory that the longer it is alive and the longer these

44:29

people are westernizing the more that becomes a normative condition and the more on the outside the taliban when they can't

44:36

come in that shows their failure but with to make it ultimately succeeded

44:41

we would have had to do things that i don't think this administration or maybe any was capable of and that was we were going to

44:47

have to tell nuclear pakistan that we understand that they support

44:54

the taliban and they support terrorism and their weaponry and expertise are killing

44:59

americans and killing out afghans alike and they're going to have to stop and that would require closer relations

45:06

with india and maybe a break with pakistan and i think that that was a bridge it was too far

45:11

to cross perhaps but i i think that would have been a radical and necessary change in u.s foreign

45:19

do you feel that china will will profit in that immediate area how

45:26

will they flow in how will they relate well one interesting little subset of that of course is it'll be interesting to see

45:33

how the taliban respond to

45:38

the chinese with their persecution of the uyghurs who one would have thought the taliban might have wanted to defend

45:45

it'll be interesting there hasn't been much support from the islamic world i have to say for the persecuted uyghurs in china

45:52

it'll be interesting to see whether the taliban are entirely prepared to cooperate with the chinese but if they

45:59

are how do you see china flowing into the vacuum that's left well we just say

46:04

first of all from my experience looking and traveling in the middle east

46:09

the idea of pan-arabic solidarity or i should say pan-islamic solidarities

46:14

tends to be only relevant to the west in other words when non-western actors

46:21

have been discriminatory or even genocidal toward muslims the muslim world does not react accordingly and i

46:28

think they understand what china's reaction would be if they were to act but that doesn't mean there's going to be naturals

46:34

there won't be natural hostilities if china and i think they will go in there for

46:39

the reasons that everybody is abused there's rare medals there's some wars that are precious

46:45

they would like to have a strategic position there vis-a-vis iran and russia and they'll probably cut

46:51

a deal and the taliban will have to be very careful as you point out because there will be muslims

46:58

that don't really care about strategic policy and they'll say this is an anti-islamic country and we

47:05

do know that the chinese when they go into africa or places in latin america they're much like the russians were in

47:11

the 1960s and 70s they're not they're clannish they don't like to integrate they have a superiority

47:17

complex and they don't do well and of course nobody does well it goes into afghanistan with that attitude so

47:25

i think they'll try to do it but i'm not sure that it will be in a cost-benefit analysis

47:30

necessary necessarily so easy for them but to to step back from that and to

47:36

come to one of the reasons that i really wanted to engage you today was something that you've referred to in a couple of

47:43

our previous conversations which is the enormous regard that americans have for australians i think you said on one

47:48

occasion that the research suggests that we are america's most favored

47:53

uh friends um it raises the question then

47:59

what should we conclude about our position you know we've been singled out and many

48:04

countries have that we're in particular by china with a list of 14 grievances

48:10

which in my view really started with the decision to refuse highway the right to

48:18

involve itself in the role out of the 5g network in australia

48:24

telecommunications and then of course america did the same britain did the same that i think is particularly

48:29

irksome to beijing and yet i think it was absolutely the right decision um

48:34

why where do you think now we should be placing our efforts

48:40

as we look at a very uncertain world feeling some chill wins from that authoritarian regime where

48:46

a well-resourced country valuable real estate a long way from other democracies

48:53

uh with a small fairly boutique highly equipped but but

48:59

not a deep military less people in the entire military than

49:05

america has stationed in korea 70 years after the end of hostilities as i understand

49:10

it then you've got you've still got people in europe and what have you um

49:16

what would be the sort of prevailing attitude towards the interests of american allies do you

49:23

think coming out of this i know that's a very broad question but it's a very big question for us here maybe i could

49:29

answer that initially by uh posing a parallel the people i have talked to in the state department that

49:35

are chinese exports very pro-australian for example and who know china

49:41

some of them were born in china and when i look at the chinese communist press i did an interview today with a taiwanese

49:49

television station in san francisco taiwanese orientated i should say

49:55

it's it's amazing how parallel the chinese propaganda is

50:00

toward australia as japan's was in the late 1930s they were telling

50:06

the asian world in particular that this was the only country that

50:13

its population was imported in a colonial exploitative way it was not indigenous and it was lightly populated

50:20

but resource rich and huge and they would never be able to defend themselves

50:26

and their mother country was way over on the other side of europe

50:31

and the united states had not been part of this australian project

50:37

and it probably wouldn't come to their help and yet the australians who heard this from the japanese and knew that

50:44

understood that there was no there was no alternative because of their ties to

50:49

the british system and the americans and the horrendous nature of the japanese

50:57

military's government and so they were in a very awkward position

51:02

australia was from 1939 to 42 where they didn't have enough resources to

51:07

protect themselves on their own from japan and yet as their obligations to britain uh increased because of the british

51:14

perilous condition they were putting people into book they were putting them all over north africa uh they were exposed and

51:22

when the united if it hadn't been for the united states victory at the battle of coral sea i think

51:28

that port moresby project would have been bombing darwin and down to sydney all the time

51:35

so they they took they made a bet that they had no choice and i don't want to be too

51:42

too pessimistic but i don't think the australians have a choice because if they were to try to negotiate with

51:49

the chinese it would be from a position of perceived weakness on the part of china we know

51:54

what china does to people they see are weak they have nothing but contempt for them and china looks at australia today

52:01

as the japanese did in the 30s they feel that you have a lot of natural resources but you don't have the human

52:08

numbers the people to adequately defend them and you won't in the in the future and they're near you

52:14

and you're in an unenviable position that your natural allies are far distant and so they're going to pressure you and

52:20

pressure you and pressure you and i think the united states because of its system and its record has enormous

52:28

advantages over china educational technological constitutional

52:34

and i think it's each according to our station is not to give up on this

52:40

partnership but try to remind both parties that we really don't have a choice that this is a threat that we're facing

52:47

that's existential in nature this is 1.5 billion people run by a communist dictatorship with the

52:54

most sophisticated propaganda the world has ever seen and a unique blend of state-run

53:02

capitalism that's highly productive in a way that communism has not been in the past and has

53:08

mastered the western mind especially this western i don't want to say decadence

53:15

but this vulnerability to race class gender all of these self-critical elements that the chinese play on no

53:22

sooner had they been targeted as the locus classics of the covet that they were telling

53:28

people in america that we were racist and just as you'd say valley fever or ebola or lyme disease after particular

53:35

locations where the pathogen originated if you dared say the china virus like the spanish flu we were told that that

53:42

was offensive and racist this is a country that you know went out and locked people up from

53:48

africa right after the and put them in force quarantine so i don't think we have a choice and we

53:55

have to find more innovative original ways that australians convey to the united states

54:03

uh you're going through a rocky time but we have confidence that you'll snap out of it that doesn't mean we're going to

54:09

be vulnerable and dependent on you but we're going to have a partnership with you to remind you that we're a self-reliant

54:16

strong country and if anybody attacks us they're going to pay a terrible price

54:21

and i don't know where this is going to lead because if we don't do it let's be honest where does it lead for your

54:26

survival or japan's survival and it only leaves one place and that's the unmentionable and that's the acquisition

54:33

of nuclear weapons which australia and south korea and taiwan and japan are perfectly capable of developing as

54:39

western countries and they could do it in a year or two and we wouldn't want that because it would provoke an arms

54:44

race probably but that's why it's so essential that the united states understand that that the

54:50

reason that you're not nuclear when you could be nuclear and same thing applies to your other allies and

54:57

partners is that you rely on us and we tell you that we're willing to risk our cities

55:03

in nuclear retaliation as somebody attacked sydney and if we're not willing to do that then

55:08

you have no choice but to go nuclear yourself and that's going to be one of the most contentious and divisive issues in your

55:15

history so there's a lot of things at stake but let's be honest what is at stake

55:21

yeah these require us to believe in ourselves and in our values and we've

55:26

spent quite a bit of our time talking about that that's the problem you know so often

55:32

we're in almost at the point of self-loathing uh we think we're an illegitimate culture we have in a a

55:38

reprehensible past that what's being passed to us is not worth defending and then that feeds right into the weakness

55:44

but having said that australia has not taken a backward step in the face of the so-called 14

55:50

grievances listed by china that must have surprised china and we're caught here on the one hand that makes them

55:56

less flexible they won't take our calls they won't interact which is pretty extraordinary on the other hand if we

56:02

were to acquiesce in any way of course that contempt that you talk about would simply flood over

56:10

that's what i think a lot of people that i knew in the trump administration and i talked to and even at the highest levels

56:18

they had enormous respect um for the rearming of japan for example it's it's

56:23

it's the investment in navy for sobriety in south korea for us subtle

56:29

changes in the philippines and of course australia and they they took it very seriously

56:35

that they had obligations if all of these countries were going to start and had been saying

56:41

no to china and they were actually making strong steps to help the united states

56:47

afghanistan's a good example but they were prepared to be

56:52

to risk you know confrontation in a military sense and we had an obligation and i think

56:59

as we saw with north korea this country just three years ago was willing to risk

everything to make sure

57:06

that north korea did not send missiles and present

57:12

japan with an untenable permanent position where it would say to japan any given day we can send a missile into

57:18

your airspace or go into your waters and you'll never know whether we were kidding or not sort of damocles so to

57:24

speak over your head and the same thing with australia and china we can have 14 demands today you can make five of them

57:31

they'll be 20 tomorrow depending on our move and we understood that and so i think that was

57:39

that wasn't a different country was i'm saying to say that was just a different administration i understand that they

57:44

represent the people but we've got to remember i think the people of australia that we went through the most extraordinary

57:51

turmoil this country has gone through since world war ii or maybe the civil war where we had

57:58

uh a virus that killed over it probably will kill

58:04

six or seven hundred thousand americans it was it was it was birthed

58:10

in a biology lab of our existential enemy in response to that we had a national

58:16

lockdown where people didn't talk or see each other for over a year we had the george floyd incident that

58:24

resulted in 120 days of rioting 2 billion dollars in damage

58:30

burning federal courthouses and then we had the most contentious election in our history because of the lockdowns 102

58:37

million people voted uh by absentee ballot that never happened and then we had

58:43

we've never had two impeachments we've never tried to convict a president when he was out of office we had

58:49

in this contention it wasn't just our foreign policy suddenly people serious people were

58:55

saying we have to get rid of the 232 year old electoral college the 232 year

59:01

old constitutional right of states to set their own voting laws and national

59:07

elections has to be abandoned oh by the way the 180-year filibuster it's racist oh by the way

59:14

the idea of 50 years of 50 50 60 years of 50 states no we're

59:19

gonna have 52 states oh by the way nine people in the supreme court for 150 years we're gonna change that too so

59:26

we're in a jacobin cultural revolution and so i think

59:33

what we're talking about has to be seen in those lenses and we have to hope that we'll get a handle on the virus either

59:40

natural or to improve prophylaxis and then these quarantines will

59:47

end people will see each other face to face and the economy will start to

59:53

to normalize and this aberrant 18 months will end but this foreign policy was a

59:58

casualty of that i think it just sheer madness put into power people

1:00:04

who under normal circumstances would not be there and i'm not putting words into their mouth when gavin newsom

1:00:10

said that the lockdown gave us an opportunity to have a more progressive capitalism where

1:00:16

hillary clinton said we would never have uh single-payer health care unless we

1:00:21

had this going back to rahm emanuel's 2008 we're never going to let a crisis going to waste or as you know from the

1:00:28

great reset of klaus suave and the davos people who said you know the culvert

1:00:35

is a lever to allow all of the countries and democracies of the world

1:00:41

to have world governance and where we'll set uniform laws about corporations emissions diversity etc so

1:00:48

i think these are really aberrant times we have to hold on so to speak until we have a return to sanity

1:00:56

a couple of questions arise out of that for in my mind one is

1:01:02

wokism we hear quite a lot about this in australia because we have the same problem uh

1:01:08

is now quite widespread in the military inclusiveness diversity and what have

1:01:14

you and you've had very senior american military people uh warning that it's detracting

1:01:21

and diverting attention away from the primary purpose of the defence forces which is defence

1:01:28

what would you say about the appropriateness of preparedness the attitude the capacity of the america a

1:01:34

very broad question i know of american defense so we can keep hearing in australia with the chinese now have more ships america has double the tonnage

1:01:41

then we hear well aircraft carriers are just so vulnerable to the modern warfare missiles and what have you that

1:01:47

america's you know air force task group

1:01:53

forces would be wiped out that that's not a solution if taiwan's attack what have you

1:01:59

do you think the american military minds will be massively if you like focused would be the real question by what's

1:02:04

happened in afghanistan will there be a careful re-evaluation

1:02:10

of objectives and in particular what needs to be done to counter whatever china does

1:02:17

i think it's already happening john the military

1:02:23

understands two or three things number one there is no support

1:02:29
for wokeness some kernel downward in the in the officer corps this was a
1:02:34
phenomenon of the one-star two-star three-star four-star
1:02:40
class and they felt that if they virtue signaled their woke
1:02:46
credentials then as far as promotion
1:02:52
career enhancement and i mean that in the crassus terms rather than saying that
1:02:57
my division uh put x amount of shells on the target or we had uh
1:03:03
my squadron had only one percent missed the cable on the carrier landing it was i i
have so many women or i have
1:03:10
so many minorities that i promoted and so that was a culture that was inside the beltway
and we have
1:03:17
too many generals that when they get to colonel they go into washington and they're
tasked with
1:03:23
the nsc or with a congressional liaison or a job in the pentagon and they become
creatures of this culture and then when
1:03:29
they go out i mean we're talking about the last two defense secretaries came from
general
1:03:36
dynamics and raytheon and they go out to these corporate boards where they become
not
1:03:42
prosperous but multi-millionaires and so that knowledge is an enticement
1:03:48
and an incentive for people to become these commanders and then they violate the
code uniform code of military
1:03:54
justice in which it says explicitly that both retired and acting four-star
1:04:01
three-star two-star flag officers are not to disparage cabinet officers secretary of
defense
1:04:07
president united states and yet we have seen them as they go back out into corp the
1:04:13
corporate world and become fantastically wealthy call the president mussolini call the
1:04:19

president hitler-like say that he should be removed sooner or later in a way that's absolutely a violation with

1:04:25

exemption and now of course they're doing it to biden and there's hysteria this week that why aren't we

1:04:32

enforcing this code but my point is this that that

1:04:38

officer corps is creating a huge backlash within the military

1:04:44

and the traditional support for the u.s military as for the cia and the fbi did

1:04:50

not come from the lab it came from the rank-and-file american patriotic american traditional american

1:04:57

these were the families that generation after generation had people dying at best stone at choice on

1:05:04

at ksong okay that word is now shaken because they feel

1:05:11

that we have a people's liberation type of attitude among our top

1:05:16

uh creatures of washington that do not represent the rank and file and they surely don't represent the traditional

1:05:22

support and there's a push back and as you see when the situation as we know from the phone

1:05:29

calls with joe biden to the afghan president we know the situation was unraveling and

1:05:36

joe biden was desperately asking the president to lie about it general milley at that very moment was

1:05:42

in congress talking about white rage climate change so was general austin the secretary

1:05:48

of defense and so there was this anger now in america

1:05:53

that while we needed sound military advice these people were virtue signaling

1:06:00

because they felt that they wanted to appease this culture and indeed they did appease it because the elizabeth warns

1:06:06

of the world who were fierce critics of the military they're not anymore they're saying we

1:06:11

love the military transgendered surgery substances disease got it

1:06:17

women in front-line combat units got it gay marriage among soldiers got it

1:06:23

paid abortions got it because these people in the military have something we've always wanted called the chain of

1:06:28

command no legislative no executive no judicial checks and balances chain of

1:06:34

command we can enact social work change when the military is a model for the country so all that everybody knows

1:06:40

and they're angry about it i've never seen it more angry that these four star retired and active had destroyed a lot

1:06:47

of their support and they're aware of it now and i cannot exaggerate the amount of criticism

1:06:53

they're get when i write a critical column on this topic i got more

1:06:58

support than anything i write and it's true of everybody i know who does that

1:07:03

people are fed up as one person said why general millie was suggesting that

1:07:09

there's a white conspiracy in the ranks based on zero evidence

1:07:14

the number of people who were killed in iraq who were white males of the middle class

1:07:20

was 70 76 74 in afghanistan so what he was essentially saying

1:07:26

to america was you give us your sons and they will die in our military at twice

1:07:32

their proportions in the general population which is about 35 white male middle class

1:07:38

and we're going to have them in our military and they're going to be inordinately represented in war zones and they're going to die at

1:07:44

twice a percentage in a military that's sworn to congress that it believes in

1:07:51

proportional representation and disparate impact and if we see that somebody doesn't have this job or this

1:07:57

pain and we're going to adjudicate it by race but you adjudicate everything by race except the number of dead

1:08:03

so people are angry at this it's a it's a non-sustainable proposition i think we're doing exactly what they

1:08:10

did after the vietnam war when they looked at vietnam and they said these people are not capable of conducting

1:08:17

a military operation again and we had a huge revolt

1:08:23

from people like h.r mcmaster who's been very good about this whole crisis he has not criticized

1:08:29

uh the former administration he's been making helpful criticisms about this one but not attacking the commander-in-chief

1:08:36

in person and he started his career by criticizing the one two three star four-star

1:08:43

generals that who knew better and yet for careerist reasons did not speak up about vietnam so i think there's going

1:08:49

to be enormous pressure on the military throughout the ranks that they feel they have the support of

1:08:55

the american people to say no and i can't tell you you cannot pick up an american

1:09:00

newspaper or online news aggregator without a column every

1:09:06

single day saying when will general milly and general austin resign there's just a popular

1:09:12

outcry about it and so i i think that we're in the middle right now of a revolution in our

1:09:18

top officer corps and that's very encouraging because that suggests to me that the rank and file as you saw in the

1:09:25

actual operation of the evacuation it was absolutely incredible for all of the poor planning on the top

1:09:33

how colonels and majors and captains and sergeants and privates got so many

1:09:38

people out so quickly under such horrific conditions no bathrooms in the plane people pregnant people with covet

1:09:46

people capable of shooting down these huge planes no plane loss no mechanical

1:09:52

problem they got them out that wasn't the top brass that was the rank and file so i i'm very confident

1:09:58

that with the right leadership will return to our excellence in the military it's reassuring because

1:10:04

uh that will be very important for global security as well as america's homeland security

1:10:11

um at the other end uh on on wokeness to use that expression um

1:10:17

you know a lot of the stuff of course comes out of academia they train the teachers it then gets into the classrooms

1:10:24

the national review recently reported and i quote millions of parents across the country are fighting back against

1:10:30

the spread of critical race theory by protesting its presence in the schools

1:10:35

are you seeing a sort of community-led backlash against this particular form of

1:10:42

of overreach because that's certainly the way that i see it i think it's starting in australia there's a feeling

1:10:48

it really has gone too far and that in itself a bit like what you've just described in the military

1:10:53

the overreach it's gone too far you finally get a backlash in february

1:10:59

i had been very outspoken as had the british historian neil ferguson has had

1:11:04

my other call to get the hoover institution scott atlas and we were all brought up for inquiry and examination by the

1:11:11

stanford faculty senate very left-wing and attack that wouldn't happen today i think because there was such a backlash

1:11:18

against that and we did not take that line down and it was such an infringement on free

1:11:23

expression that they were trying to enforce upon us that's just a minor example but across the board there are

1:11:29

people that are very angry but they're the people who are always quiet they follow the rules they're busy their primary

1:11:36

concerns are their community their family their religion their traditions

1:11:41

and they don't boycott they don't cancel people out and now they're starting to see that

1:11:46

these other people do and they're hijacking their culture they're hijacking

1:11:51

their politics their social life their culture and they're saying you know what if i don't speak out

1:11:57

it's going to be too late and so they are speaking out that's one thing and then very quickly

1:12:02

the critical race theory woke movement is inconsistent it's

1:12:08

illogical it's incoherent it basically says according to professor kindly to stop discrimination you have to

1:12:14

discriminate to stop racism you can be racist and it completely gets away from the idea of

1:12:21

class so here you can be oprah with 90 million dollar estate talking to megan markle at a 14

1:12:28

million dollar state commiserating out of your of over your ill treatment when you have

1:12:35

a mexican-american guy on a forklift in fresno or a white guy in youngstown tile

1:12:40

never had anything but he's he's less or more privileged because of his skin color so

1:12:46

i think a lot of people say in a multi-racial democracy we don't know who is who is it one-eighth one-fourth is

1:12:52

obama black or is he half white or half-black or what so there's all of these inconsistencies that just saying

1:13:00

we're going to draw a line and 70 of you are white and whiteness is evil and 30 are

1:13:07

not white and so you have not whiteness and people are saying well is there such a thing called blackness then

1:13:12

is there such a thing called brownness and are you able to be empirical and critique it the way you do whiteness that is in blanket and unfair

1:13:20

methodologies stereotype you want to go back to that because this country and its racist past used to do that about

1:13:26

blackness and so i don't think it's sustainable i think a lot of people from a variety of angles

1:13:32

are saying you don't know which race a person belongs to you don't stereotype people because we

1:13:38

fought that during the civil rights period we don't want to make race essential to who we are it's we were

1:13:44

getting to the point was incidental class is the more important thing to worry about as far as lack of

1:13:51

opportunity or lack of so-called equity it now we have i think there's 17 ethnic

1:13:57

groups mostly asian that have a higher per capita income in america than so-called whites

1:14:03

so this thing is f is starting to fall on its own inconsistencies the weight of

1:14:10

its own inconsistencies people are getting angry and uh

1:14:15

i'm a little worried that the backlash is going to be fiercer than anybody imagines

1:14:20

because they've destroyed so many people's lives and they are so obnoxious and they were

1:14:26

so crazy that that it's going to get pretty tough

1:14:32

and i think you're going to see a a large conservative backlash i think you'll see it in australia too i think

1:14:38

you're going to see a long uh one of the things that i was surprised at the french

1:14:43

they essentially said to us and these are the people who gave us the careers of gary dala khan and michelle

1:14:50

fuco that helped ruin our academy they said to us we don't want your import

1:14:55

we don't want wokeness we're not going to tear down one statue in france and we would that an american has said

1:15:01

that and so i think a lot of people look at what's going on in america and they're

1:15:06

saying uh we don't want to import that from america and there's going to be americans that

1:15:13

are going to fight back against it i think they will i i've been surprised because i live in a

1:15:18

community that's about 90 mexican-american how anti-woke that community is

1:15:25

at least the middle class that are citizens have been here in generations they don't want it they feel it's

1:15:31

racist they don't they're glad to be out of mexico uh they're very patriotic

1:15:37

they send children right to the marine corps combat units and so

1:15:43

that they don't want any part of it it's a very little thin layer veneer elite in

1:15:49

the university and law in the political class but they have enormous

1:15:55

influence as we said before because they operate social media media entertainment corporations silicon valley

1:16:04

victor you've been very generous at the time uh it's been very very rich in it for australia

1:16:10

as well as for the rest of the world your content has been extraordinarily important and i do want

1:16:16

to thank you just finally um you've got an upcoming book i i'm rather hoping we might be able to

1:16:23

talk about it in due course uh the dying citizen yes i think it's uh

1:16:28

out of these frustrations that we were talking to i i wrote an idea that part of the problem in the united states but

1:16:35

in the western world was the lack of citizenship or the the erosion of it citizenship started

1:16:40

the classical greece with the idea in rome you had to have a middle class globalization helped warp that but also

1:16:49

a number of other deindustrialization of the working class

1:16:55

for example or a or vertical integration of large corporation but the idea of

1:17:00

family businesses and family farmers and middle class people

1:17:05

culturally they became suspect all this vocabulary deplorable drags chumps

1:17:11

and yet without a middle class you don't have people that have a natural suspicion of their

1:17:16

the aristocratic class and yet they don't they have the independence

1:17:22

of that the poor doesn't that's what i'm quoting directly there from aristotle another thing that i discuss in the book

1:17:27

is you you can't have a country without borders you have to have a finite place where people are secure

1:17:34

to develop their customs and traditions and create a unique culture before they spread it or before they go

1:17:41

if they don't have a secure border they're nothing you cannot

1:17:46

have a tribal culture that was a pre-civilizational idea that you identify by your superficial appearance

1:17:52

or you hire your first cousin rather than on the basis of merit and yet this work revolution is a tribal

1:17:59

manifestation of something that's pre-civilizational and then finally from the elite these are organic processes that are

1:18:05

destroying citizenship but from the elite in our country and i think it's true of yours as well we are getting a lot of people

1:18:12

who are not elected but exercise government power in the intelligence of the tax ir our your version of the irs

1:18:20

or the pentagon or the cia or fbi we saw that with all these russian collusion

1:18:25

and lewis learner of the irs so we have unaccountable people who are judge jury and executioner

1:18:32

they've combined the legislative executive and judicial branches into a bureaucratic

1:18:38

position and they have a natural antipathy for people who question them

1:18:43

and then second we have evolutionaries i know you do in australia that are and i mentioned all of these institutions they

1:18:49

want to change they don't want two senators from a state even though it's in the constitution and the one thing

1:18:54

that cannot be changed in the constitution but they want to change it electoral college justice they want to

1:19:00

take the structure of the united states and say you know what we do not want a constitutional republic

1:19:06

we doesn't give us equity on the back end so we wanted to destroy it and start with a radical

1:19:12

democracy socialism and finally we talked about globalism that

1:19:18

here in the united states our bi-coastal elite where all the major universities are silicon valley the media the corporate

1:19:25

world wall street they have created an international culture in which somebody that i see at stanford

1:19:33

or at facebook or google will tell you every restaurant in paris or

1:19:39

shanghai or that they visit but they've never been to a restaurant in bakersfield 180 miles away or they have

1:19:46

no idea where fresno is or they don't know anything about cotton growing or grape growing in their own state so

1:19:52

these are cosmopolitans that's a classical word for citizens of the world but their interests are not with the us

1:19:59

and you can see there that davos group that violates all the canons of their own ideology on the

1:20:05

premise that they're so morally superior they should be exempt so these as i wrote the book in

1:20:11

context of how we can stop this and how dangerous it is and it's the root of many of the things

1:20:17

we talked about that we don't have empowered citizens that know their rights and have civic education

1:20:24

but it's it's epidemic in the west and it's something that people want

1:20:29

people warned us about john the great philosophers aristotle plato nietzsche

1:20:34

hegel for the pessimist in germa they all said that when you combine market capitalism with constitutional

1:20:41

government you create a free affluent citizen but if that citizen does not

1:20:46

check his appetites or is not empowered or is not autonomous then

1:20:52

they can turn to decadence or sloth or leisure and lose their rights and so it requires

1:20:58

a an economically independent politically confident citizen

1:21:04

and i hope we can restore it amen

1:21:09

amen thank you so very much it's been a great pleasure and i i hope perhaps if you
indulge me we might be able to talk

1:21:15

more about that when the book's out also too you've been very generous in having me
on your show

1:21:22

thank you and all the very best thank you did you enjoy this conversation

1:21:28

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bell

1:21:35

[Music]

1:21:41

[Music]

English (auto-generated)