

Episode 145: "America's Intelligence Wars" with Ambassador Pete Hoekstra and Fred Fleitz

Speaker 1 ([00:04](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton show, featuring conversations with leaders, entrepreneurs, artists, and thinkers. Fresh perspectives on money, culture, politics, and human flourishing. Interesting people, interesting things.

Bill Walton ([00:24](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton show. I'm Bill Walton. We are living in a very complicated and dangerous time for freedom in America. National security is no longer just about threats to our freedom from external enemies. For Conservatives, we also need to be concerned about threats from our own government and being tarred with the label, white supremacist. Here's what Joe Biden said recently, "According to the intelligence community, terrorism from white supremacy is the most lethal threat to the Homeland today. Not ISIS, not Al-Qaeda. It is white supremacy." And as president he's moved rapidly to weaponize every federal agency, including our military against this supposed threat. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin tells us "I will fight hard to rid our ranks of racist and supremacist extremists. We can keep America safe from our enemies if some of those enemies lie within our own ranks." Well, when you label your enemies, racist and extremist, anything goes.

Meanwhile, clown congressmen and member of the house intelligence committee Eric Swalwell sleeps with Chinese spies, meets with Hamas linked charity and cavort shirtless, Vladimir Putin like on a camel. And he goes untouched. Well, where does this go from here? What next? And joining me today are two men who understand these issues as well as anyone on the planet. And we're going to talk them through some of them, maybe not all of them. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra former chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, U.S. Ambassador to the Netherlands and Chairman of the Center for Security Policy Board of Advisors. Pete was awarded the CIA's Agency Seal Medal and the National Intelligence Distinguished Service Medal.

Also joining again as my friend Fred Fleitz, who's the President of the Center for Security Policy who served in 2018 as Deputy Assistant to the President and as Chief of Staff of the National Security Council. He previously held national security jobs with the CIA, the DIA, the Department of State and House Intelligence Committee Staff. Pete, Fred, welcome.

Pete Hoekstra ([02:47](#)):

Great to be here.

Fred Fleitz ([02:48](#)):

Thank you here.

Bill Walton ([02:49](#)):

Well, I'm really honored. We have a former chairman of the House Intelligence Committee. Finally, we can find out what's really going on. Pete, can you frame for us. We're going to talk about a lot of things, but just would you get us kicked off with how you see the world?

Pete Hoekstra ([03:04](#)):

Yeah. Number one, it's great to be here with you today. Great to talk about these topics and educate your audience on the issues and the challenges that we face, not only as Conservatives, but that we also

face as Americans. I mean intelligence, national security, they shouldn't be partisan issues. As a matter of fact, when I served as the chairman and Fred Brett and I worked together on the intelligence committee, we were rather proud that these were not partisan issues. We were focused on the content and the quality of the work that the intelligence community does. And what we've seen over the last five years is so what did we focus on our work? Where has it fallen apart? We saw it towards the end of the Biden administration, and the transition into the Trump administration. The weaponization of intelligence, the weaponization of the intelligence community against an incoming president of the United States.

You have the Steele dossier and you had what was going on you remember the FBI as part of the intelligence community. They were doing the subpoenas against Mike Lynn and all of these things. And what we found is that it was done on the flimsiest of evidence. Matter of fact, no evidence at all that there was collusion with the Russians and these types of things. But what they did is they use the intelligence community that basically hamstring and divert the energies of an incoming president away from implementing his agenda by distracting the American people and Congress, by bringing up all these false accusations. So they weaponized the intelligence community. And it's continuing today with in the last couple of weeks where you hear about the NSA listening to Tucker Carlson screening his emails, outrageous.

Bill Walton ([05:04](#)):

How widespread was that? I mean, we've heard about the FBI but were the other agencies also involved in the campaign against Trump?

Pete Hoekstra ([05:12](#)):

Absolutely. It went all the way to the top, remember the two big proponents of the Russian collusion were the leadership of the intelligence community, Jim Clapper, John Brennan. So what they were doing is they were setting a tone for the entire intelligence community saying politicization is all right. And you have intelligence community station. So when I was in the Netherlands okay, we had intelligence community stationed there, great professional people. And these are the people that are being undercut by the steps that are being taken at the highest level in the agency. And don't the ones that I worked with in the Hague, they don't want to be partisan. They've got a job to do, and they're focused on doing everything they can to get the information, the intelligence, to keep America safe and make sure that our policy leaders have the best information to make the best decisions. So you have one thing that's happening at the moment intelligence community.

The second thing that I'm very worried about is in 2004 as a result of the 911 Commission, we had a liberal Democrat in the house, Jane Harman. You had a conservative Republican and who was chairman of the house intelligence committee, that was myself from Michigan. You had Joe Lieberman, an independent from Connecticut. And you had Susan Collins, a moderate Republican from Maine, right?. And the four of us worked together. We were all competent. We liked each other. And through the leadership of the four of us, we passed the intelligence reform bill. The first major reorganization of the intelligence community and 50 years is a response to what happened on 911. Now, there's disagreements about how good it was and what the problems and issues were, but it was the four of us shepherding us through.

And today I think about, let's see a Liberal from California, a Conservative from Michigan, an independent from Connecticut and a moderate from Maine. What would happen if you put the four of them into a room and said, "Hey, work this out?" It wouldn't happen. Think about it. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee today, this is a guy that Nancy Pelosi, he's a Lieutenant of Nancy

Pelosi. He spearheaded the most partisan process that you can have on Capitol Hill, the impeachment process. So you have a totally dysfunctional House Intelligence Committee that is supposed both to be setting the priorities and the framework for where the intelligence community is going to be in five years, in 10 years. You do a new satellite program, you don't do that in a year. It's a 10, 15 year program from concept to actually launching a satellite.

They're not doing the oversight. They're not going in. They're not holding the NSA accountable for reading perhaps your emails or my emails or Fred's emails. They're not doing this oversight to keep these agencies within their lanes. They're not doing the work to see if they're competent and qualified. The system is breaking down. We've got to get politics back out of the intelligence community and get these professionals and what, the 80, \$90 billion that they spend every year focused on exactly what they're supposed to be doing, keeping America safe.

Bill Walton ([08:56](#)):

Fred?

Fred Fleitz ([08:58](#)):

I was so honored to work with Pete Hoekstra when he was chairman of the House Intelligence Committee.

Bill Walton ([08:58](#)):

Were you on his staff?

Fred Fleitz ([09:03](#)):

I was on his staff for five years.

Pete Hoekstra ([09:05](#)):

I worked with these guys for five years.

Bill Walton ([09:07](#)):

Was he a good boss?

Fred Fleitz ([09:08](#)):

He was one of the best bosses I've ever heard and-

Bill Walton ([09:11](#)):

I guess he must be. You brought him in-

Fred Fleitz ([09:12](#)):

Yeah and we've become good friends. We were through some good times and bad times, but it was clear when he was on the committee that Democrats and Republicans were working together in a non-partisan fashion most of the time.

Bill Walton ([09:25](#)):

What years was this? I just want to-

Fred Fleitz ([09:27](#)):

I was on it from 2006 to 2011.

Pete Hoekstra ([09:30](#)):

I was on the committee from 2001 to 2011.

Bill Walton ([09:35](#)):

So roughly 10 years ago. I'm trying to set the context for where we were then and where we are now.

Fred Fleitz ([09:42](#)):

Yeah. We've gone totally off the rails really beginning in about 2007, 2008, when the Democrats came back and took over the house.

Bill Walton ([09:51](#)):

And that's when Schiff took over?

Fred Fleitz ([09:53](#)):

No, Schiff it was first Silvestre Reyes. But, Schiff took over in what, 13, 14?

Pete Hoekstra ([10:02](#)):

Something like that.

Fred Fleitz ([10:03](#)):

Yeah, but Pete and Jane Harman were friends. They're still friends and they didn't agree all the time. They went on TV together. They cooperated most of the time. That is gone.

Bill Walton ([10:11](#)):

Boy, I wish we had Jane Harman back compared to who we have now.

Fred Fleitz ([10:14](#)):

I often promote Jane Harman as a Democrat who Biden just gave a job to because the cash she has is so awful. But also these are select committees. And that means the members don't get on by seniority. They're handpicked by congressional leaders, the Senate Intelligence and the House Intelligence Committee to keep people who are not qualified or not appropriate of. People who won't keep secrets. People who will politicize the committee. Pelosi has used the select process to fill the committee with political lieutenants to do her bidding. And that's why Swalwell who has no business being on this committee. You know, the Swalwell story is so scandalous. There's a woman in Fang Fang who-

Bill Walton ([10:57](#)):

Do they make these things up? I feel like I'm in a bond movie-

Fred Fleitz ([11:00](#)):

No, it's actually- she goes by Christine Fang and Fang Fang.

Bill Walton ([11:00](#)):

Okay.

Fred Fleitz ([11:02](#)):

Swalwell was elected in 2013, Fang Fang helped him get elected. She worked on his campaign. Once he was elected, she put somebody in his personal office. In 2015, after he was on the intelligence committee the FBI gave him a defensive briefing about her and she disappeared. Now this came out late last year that this happened and there were Republic saying, "Why didn't no one tell us about this and how could he remain on the committee?"

Bill Walton ([11:29](#)):

So the Ds knew about it and they didn't tell the Rs?

Fred Fleitz ([11:33](#)):

There was a claim that the Republicans were briefed, but Kevin McCarthy another Republicans said, "We did not know about this. And if we did, we would have objected." And look, I'm not saying that he was handing intelligence to this woman, but look, if you're close to a member of the House Intelligence Committee, you learn a lot. You learn the schedules, you learn the travel, you learn the names of people come into his office. Some of them could have been defectors. This should have been declared to the FBI or to the committee leadership. The fact that he had this affiliation and the fact that this stopped after the FBI briefed him that you are basically very close friends with a Chinese spy. I mean, I just wonder how many more Chinese spies are doing this in Congress.

Bill Walton ([12:19](#)):

You're watching the Bill Walton show. I'm here with Ambassador Pete Hoekstra and Fred Fleitz. And we're talking about the politicization of the intelligence committees and where it's gone in the last 10 years.

One of the things I was surprised when I was preparing for this is that congressmen are not required to get background checks. Is that true?

Pete Hoekstra ([12:40](#)):

That is true.

Bill Walton ([12:41](#)):

So everybody else in the building's got to go through a rigorous background check, but if you get elected to Congress, nothing?

Pete Hoekstra ([12:47](#)):

That is correct. Now. I still remember Denny Speaker Hastert, telling me "Pete, you're going to be the next chairman of the Intel Committee." I don't know whether at that point in time he had asked the FBI or someone to conduct a background check on me. But by virtue of being a member of Congress, you get security clearances. Now, I would have been fine if Denny had asked for a personal background check to the FBI about someone that he nominated or that he had selected to become chairman of the committee, but it is not essential. It's not a requirement. No.

Fred Fleitz ([13:31](#)):

I think it should be. And many members, I understand they don't want the executive branch investigating members of Congress. I get that, but if Swalwell had-

Bill Walton ([13:40](#)):

So that's the approximate reason why it isn't happening, you're not supposed to be-

Fred Fleitz ([13:44](#)):

That's one of main arguments they make.

Pete Hoekstra ([13:44](#)):

I think these investigations could be conducted by the Capitol Hill police. If Swalwell had declared Fang Fang, it would have been a red flag. She was so obviously a Chinese agent. And I have to assume in this instance, the Chinese government was developing a relationship with him before he was even elected, and she continued this relationship. And I think if you're going to have access to our most sensitive secrets, members of Congress should have some type of background investigation, or at least declare foreigners who they have affiliations with. And that doesn't happen right now.

Bill Walton ([14:15](#)):

You know, when I was hearing that I was trying to think well, in the good old days you'd say the FBI is going to do a really thorough background check and that would be the gold seal of approval. But now we're also hearing the FBI has been politicized. And can you trust the FBI to do an honest background check? And I hate saying that because I'm with you Pete, I say it's about Conservatives, it's really about all Americans that we ought to be worried about, but the approximate people they're going after Conservatives. So could this be a partisan thing as well, background checks?

Pete Hoekstra ([14:52](#)):

Absolutely. I mean I hate to think of what would have happened with John Brennan, who was at the White House for awhile, then at the CIA. But if he would have been part of the process that would have approved who got a background or who got a clearance and who did not get a clearance in Congress, it would be a powerful weapon. And I think that's ... Fred's suggestion is a very workable one. We have the capabilities in the legislative branch to do background checks for 435 members in the house and a 100 members in the Senate, to get that done. And maybe it's not going to go into the same depth and all of that, that you'll see others going through, but at least you would have some investigations so that as the speaker or the minority leader, we're making key assignments to the intelligence committees, the defense committees, ethics committees, and those types of things. They would have this information available. But perhaps more importantly members of Congress might want to have this done so that they will be aware of relationships that they have that might be questionable.

So I would've not had a problem with someone saying, "Hey, people are going to do a background check." I'd say, "Thank you."

Bill Walton ([16:16](#)):

People have gone through this and have read their own background check are astonished at how much they find out about people they thought they knew and didn't really know.

Pete Hoekstra ([16:25](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([16:27](#)):

And so that's the kind of thing that would come up. I mean, here's this person you're associating with and did you know that they were really doing this?

Pete Hoekstra ([16:34](#)):

And once you're in the job, the number of people that you meet, grows exponentially. You're traveling overseas. I mean when I was on the committee, I would probably travel 15, 20 times a year overseas. So you'd go to some friendly countries, but you'd be spending time in other places. You'd be in Afghanistan, you'd be in Iraq, or Pakistan and all of these countries. And you're always making new acquaintances, and you would get briefed by your staff on who these folks were.

Bill Walton ([17:12](#)):

But you never thought it was an opportunity to go shirtless on a camel?

Pete Hoekstra ([17:17](#)):

That would not have been a pretty sight. I was in better shape then than I am now, but I'm still not sure I'd be ready to get on a camel-

Bill Walton ([17:24](#)):

Just a level of maturity that you was out there representing the United States as a Congressman. And that's the thing you choose to do. But this man is a clown.

Fred Fleitz ([17:34](#)):

But you know that's not the worst of it. He was there to associate with meeting with the Qatar Foundation, which has ties to Hamas, a terrorist organization. That's been making the news right now. It wasn't just going around shirtless, not a camel. He was meeting with people he shouldn't have been meeting with.

Bill Walton ([17:50](#)):

Hamas, tell us about Hamas.

Fred Fleitz ([17:54](#)):

Hamas is the terrorist organization that fired thousands of missiles into Israel just a couple of months ago. It's funded by Iran. It is a radical Islamic organization that runs Gaza. It's a bad group, and they're trying to push their influence of the United States through universities. This is an organization that a member of Congress should not have met with. And it's been making the rounds right now that this was part of Swalwell's trip to Qatar.

Bill Walton ([18:20](#)):

They're doing something similar to what the Chinese are doing with the Confucius institutes. They don't want to be on campus.

Fred Fleitz ([18:27](#)):

I believe so. Yes.

Pete Hoekstra ([18:29](#)):

Oh yeah. I mean, you've got multiple organizations in the United States that have ties into Hamas, Hezbollah and other Muslim extremist groups throughout the Middle East, but they've got ties in the United States. They've been trying to influence our positions labeling organizations as anti Muslim or whatever. And it's kind of like now we're looking at groups that are here to undermine the United States and our values and those types of things and you're right. It's the same thing that the Chinese do. If you are an open society like we are, these groups can have access. We need to do a much better job of monitoring them and exposing them for who they are.

Bill Walton ([19:18](#)):

I want to get back act is something I think you'll find interesting. Pete, when you were in the committee, there was a process when there were ethics questions or compromise questions from members of Congress. You and the ranking member would get together to look over that.

Pete Hoekstra ([19:32](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([19:33](#)):

So there should have been a process that would have been used for Swalwell. And I'm wondering what were your experiences when a member of Congress was accused of some type of inappropriate contact with a foreign intelligence service, et cetera, like that?

Pete Hoekstra ([19:45](#)):

Well, the first thing that would happen is we would get that information. Most likely we'd get it from the FBI. They would report that, "Hey, unbeknownst perhaps to the member, these are the people that they were meeting with." That information would be shared with me and the ranking member, in my case Jane Harman. We would review it, we might bring it to the speaker. We might bring it to the minority leader. But we would then authorize that member to be approached by the FBI so that they could explain it to them. And then they could explain or say, "Well, thank you. I didn't know that. Thank you for bringing this to my attention." Or they could say, "Yeah, I knew that." And give an explanation.

But the ranking member and myself as well as the speaker and the minority leader, we would monitor not every day, but when these things kind of came up, we would take it very seriously because of the information that we have coming into the committee. And we would confront members. The same thing would happen every two years when we would add new committee members. We would have a serious discussion. I would in my case with the speaker saying, "Hey, here are the 30 members that have asked to get on the committee," because it was a committee that a lot of people wanted to get on. And here we have three openings and we would go through and say, "Okay. Hey, this person is really, really great. We know their background and all of this, but they also come from a military background or an intelligence background."

And then Fred and I were talking about, and sometimes because I don't have that. And it's kind of like we also work to get a balance on the committee. We also like to bring in people who had no

background in intelligence, because they sometimes ask the best questions. It's kind of like, "I don't know."

Bill Walton ([21:43](#)):

Well, is that process still happening? I mean is it broken down along with a lot of other checks and vital? This may be a terrible analogy, but I think what's happening to border security and basically all the agents that were protecting our border are now acting as escorts bringing people into the country. In the last six months, has this also been the sort of thing it's been shut down to protect us now?

Pete Hoekstra ([22:07](#)):

What you're what you're saying is there's still a criteria. Okay. Nancy Pelosi is still very interested in who's put on that committee. But the criteria have changed. It's now her partisan hacks who carry her agenda forward rather than those who have a passion for making sure that the intelligence community is working the way that it is supposed to, and that it's non-partisan. Speaker Pelosi is now put on the committee people who are clearly focused on partisanship and how they can move and how they can use the intelligence committee to move their political agenda forward rather than focusing on what the real mission of the committee is.

Bill Walton ([22:50](#)):

Who's the ranking member, right now?

Pete Hoekstra ([22:53](#)):

Devin Nunes.

Bill Walton ([22:54](#)):

Devin Nunes?

Pete Hoekstra ([22:54](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Walton ([22:54](#)):

So he's been outspoken on a lot of these issues. He's been very, very good.

Pete Hoekstra ([22:59](#)):

Yeah. He's been awesome and he's got a passion for the community, and he's defending the community against the partisan activities. And he's done a great job in terms of exposing the partisanship that Adam Schiff has put in.

Fred Fleitz ([23:16](#)):

There was a serious bipartisan process when there were security concerns about members when Pete was there. That's what he's talking about. This is how bad it is now. They're trying to build a wall in the intelligence committee offices. And what I mean is the staff sitting in is-

Bill Walton ([23:30](#)):

Physically?

Fred Fleitz ([23:31](#)):

Yeah physically. The staff sits in this large room, Republican on one side Democrats on another. The staffs get along so badly that newness is trying to build a wall to stop the Democrats from spying on the Republican staff. And he almost got, it was so bad. They'd hang out to listen in to phone calls. Basically they were out for politics. They were not out for cooperation. I left the committee in 2011 with good friends on both sides. In fact, no one didn't like me on the Democratic side, because we worked together in a bipartisan fashion. Right now, the atmosphere is so poisonous. It's just bad for our country. And I don't see how this community can do any serious oversight given how political it has become.

Pete Hoekstra ([24:12](#)):

It has become ... Nancy Pelosi the other day vetoed a couple of Kevin McCarthy's picks for the 1/6 commission, which is unprecedented. The minority leader has the right to pick minority members for these commissions. And I don't think it's ever happened in the history of Congress where the speaker has come and said "You're not going to get who you want." I was talking with someone on HPSCI, the House Intelligence Committee the other day. And I didn't get along great with the ranking member from 2000 or the chairman from 2007 to 2011, but he gave me total free reign in terms of what I wanted to do. On Thursday night, when Congress got done, if I wanted to go to Iraq, it's kind of like, "Hey, Pete, go." And I would go and I take a couple of my staff people with me and we would go.

Today, if Nunes or one of his staff people want to go somewhere and do oversight, they have to take a Democratic staff with them who has to sit in on every meeting to know exactly what Devin Nunes is hearing, or they may not leave the country. That's like, wow. The political environment has really gotten ugly in all of Congress but it may be the worst on the Intel committee, which is unprecedented.

Bill Walton ([25:44](#)):

You're watching the Bill Walton show and we're having a very alarming conversation with Ambassador Pete Hoekstra Fred Fleitz about the really toxic and poisonous politicization of the House Intelligence Committee.

Fred Fleitz ([25:59](#)):

Well, and let's talk about who is on the 1/6 committee. Yeah-

Bill Walton ([26:06](#)):

1/6 is January [crosstalk 00:26:08], yeah the so-called insurrection.

Fred Fleitz ([26:09](#)):

I thought I'd toss that to you because I know you want to talk about it.

Pete Hoekstra ([26:16](#)):

Well no, I mean so the speaker puts on some of her most partisan people on the 1/6 commission, and McCarthy nominates his and he can't get his people on. And so I applaud him. He reached a point where he just said, "Fine, forget it. I can't work with the speaker on this issue."

Bill Walton ([26:38](#)):

Let me ask you a political question. Seems to me that in the last six months, and this is not my world, the Ds led by Biden and Pelosi and Schumer particularly the first two. I don't know where Schumer is in all these, but they've been pushing the most radical possible agenda. That's unpopular, I think with probably 70, 75, 80% of Americans. They're going after the radical left do all these things. Aren't they worried about a bloodbath in 2022? I mean, we've got another election coming up in a fairly short time. Don't they care about their political future?

Pete Hoekstra ([27:13](#)):

First, correct. One thing you've mentioned a couple of times the last six months. The Intel committee, it's not the last six months, it's at least the last four years.

Bill Walton ([27:22](#)):

Okay. But we do have this new president, but this was happening even under Trump.

Pete Hoekstra ([27:28](#)):

Oh yeah, Nancy. Remember like I said, Adam Schiff was chairman of the committee and led the impeachment while President Trump was in office.

Bill Walton ([27:36](#)):

Did he do that as chairman of the Intelligence Committee?

Pete Hoekstra ([27:38](#)):

Chairman of the Intelligence Committee.

Bill Walton ([27:39](#)):

So he was using the powers of that committee to run the impeachment?

Pete Hoekstra ([27:42](#)):

Yes. With secret hearings and people couldn't bring in attorneys. It was an unbelievably rigged process against the president. And you talk about, will there be a bloodbath? I think there's a good possibility, typically two years into a president's first term, there is a significant realignment. And with the house as close as it is today, Republicans need to pick up seven, eight seats or something like that and they will be the majority party. I think, there's a pretty good chance that, that's going to happen. And it will be because of the policy, because China, they were just accused of doing this major hack, no consequences, no consequences. They continue the Uyghurs and you go right down the list on the issues that ... When I was in the Netherlands promoting the policies of Donald Trump, these were not Donald Trump policies alone. You would go home and I come from the state of Michigan, holding NATO accountable and our allies accountable for paying their fair share of NATO, that's not a Republican or a Democrat issue.

That's just a common sense issue to kind of like you go to the people in Michigan and say "Yeah, why are we paying the Dutch share for NATO?" Right? Detroit auto workers, West Michigan auto workers saying "We want to have the same access to the German market to sell our cars as what BMW and Mercedes have." That's not a Republican or a Democrat issue. Holding China accountable for intellectual property theft, and these types of things. That's not a Republican and these were all common sense issues that strike a real chord with the Heartland in America. And so this is why I think the Democrats will have a hard time.

Bill Walton ([29:49](#)):

But why do I feel like the Chinese or the left in America's making common cause with the Chinese?

Pete Hoekstra ([29:55](#)):

Because they are.

Bill Walton ([29:56](#)):

But it's grown worse than that. There are corporations in Wall Street, which is my old stomping ground also seems to be making common cause with the Chinese.

Pete Hoekstra ([30:09](#)):

We will ultimately win the struggle with China just because of who we are. But Wall Street, Silicon valley and Hollywood are making it much more difficult. They're not standing in alignment with folks who want to hold China accountable. In some ways they're working on the other side. Okay? I mean, China's a huge market for the companies on Wall Street.

Bill Walton ([30:36](#)):

Now when you were on the House Intelligence Committee I guess 10 years ago maybe it hadn't become as apparent, but how long have you watched this stuff happening?

Pete Hoekstra ([30:45](#)):

I voted no in 2000, 2001 on permanent normal trade relations, which is with China. Okay?

Bill Walton ([30:53](#)):

I salute you for that.

Pete Hoekstra ([30:56](#)):

Yeah. I probably cast lots of bad votes, but I go back on that one and say "I got that one right." How I got to the right answer I have absolutely.

Bill Walton ([31:07](#)):

That was not consensus though. I mean the consensus among everyone is we're going to bring them in. They'll be liberal. They'll be just like us.

Pete Hoekstra ([31:15](#)):

Yeah, but you know when I got on the committee in 2000, all of a sudden you start hearing about what the Chinese are doing on our universities. Not in terms of trying to educate students and a propaganda campaign, but when you hear they're trying to steal our intellectual property and research. When you hear what they're doing with the business community and those types of things, it became very obvious immediately that China was a huge concern, but American people don't know how big of a concern we should be.

Bill Walton ([31:50](#)):

Well let's talk about that because we've got this ... I love the name Fang Fang, who was a student. And we've got hundreds of thousands of Chinese students studying in America, and many of them are not students. And as I understand that the Chinese Communist Party has an edict that if you're a Chinese citizen and you're working or living abroad, you really report to the Chinese Communist Party. So in effect, they've deputized everybody not living in China to be an agent of the state. And some of those people really are, and they have I'm sure handlers and things like that. And others are just informal. Is that just a fear or is that pervasive? Or how do we think about that? Because many of us say, "Well gee, we've got a Chinese friend. We like them." Was it-

Pete Hoekstra ([32:41](#)):

I think yours is an accurate description. Yeah. It's not a myth. It's not fear-mongering, it's reality. The globalist elite sees the U.S. as the main threat to our national security. And they like to reign in the United States with the United Nations, with deals with Europe. They don't see China as a threat. They don't see Russia as a threat. They see America as a threat. And that's why President Trump's foreign policy America First was so successful. It put American foreign policy first. It put the interest of the American people, American business, our economy first, it kept us out of unnecessary wars. It said no treaties, if it hurts the average American. And it was very tough on China. It was tough on Russia. It really rejected what the globalist elites were doing.

Remember when Joe Biden went to Europe for the G7 Conference and they welcomed him into the club. And you saw Biden sitting with all these other European leaders, laughing it up as they talked about how to raise global taxes and how to join the Paris Climate Change Agreement, the American people don't want that. I wrote an op ed recently that Biden was saying America First is over. The world, knows it's not over. That this is a very popular strategy and I think the next president is going to put it back in place.

Bill Walton ([34:02](#)):

Well, I certainly hope so. I've been to Davos and there really is a group of people that see themselves as the globalist elite. I mean, it's just incredible how they make common cause against regular human beings.

Pete Hoekstra ([34:16](#)):

Yeah, no, I mean, the I don't want to be part of the European club. I don't want America to be part of the European club. I love Europe. Okay? And Diane and I will go back. We love the Dutch.

Bill Walton ([34:27](#)):

We love the food.

Pete Hoekstra ([34:28](#)):

Love the food, love to travel. But I love America. Okay? I love the concept of freedom. And these kinds of things where you're in the Netherlands and you talk to the Dutch government say "Hey, let's talk about trade." And they say "That's a Brussels issue. We don't do that in the Netherlands anymore. We have to go through Brussels on that."

Bill Walton ([34:47](#)):

The Dutch which was one of the most successful trading economies countries in the world, rivaling Venice now says they don't do trade?

Pete Hoekstra ([34:56](#)):

They have to negotiate all trade through Brussels. And I joked with them and I said "If the U.S. and the Dutch had to do a trade agreement, we'd get together for lunch. We talk in the afternoon and for dinner we'd have an agreement, right?" Because we see the world-

Bill Walton ([35:13](#)):

Not if you got to go through Brussels.

Pete Hoekstra ([35:14](#)):

You're not going to get it through Brussels and they said, "Oh, Hoekstra is now arguing for bilaterals." It's kind of no, I understand how the EU works, but this is how it would've worked on a bilateral basis.

Bill Walton ([35:25](#)):

Well, I framed the opening in terms of conservatives, but I really think it's enemies of freedom. I mean, it's sort of the people who believe in American exceptionalism, which is about the constitution and freedom and limited government. And I think that's the battle. It's those of us who believe in freedom and and those who maybe think they had to be free, but you shouldn't.

Pete Hoekstra ([35:49](#)):

Right. And I don't want to give our freedom to globalist organizations. Okay? I don't want to transfer authority from Washington or the State Capitol, or the city council. I don't want to move it anywhere. I want to leave it right here in the United States. And I think that is what the president made very, very clear, president Trump. And Europe can go do what it wants and those types of things, but actually this model of freedom works okay.

Bill Walton ([36:24](#)):

You're watching the Bill Walton show. So I'm here with Fred Fleitz and Ambassador Pete Hoekstra and we're talking about the idea of freedom and the idea of America First means freedom, and why that is such a good thing not only for Americans, but probably the rest of the world. I'm on the board of ACU and Matt Schlapp has started organizing CPAC meetings in Japan, Brazil, all over the world. And it turns out that there's this movement that's about freedom. It's not necessarily about red hats, although they will show up at a rally in Tokyo with a red hat on. It's incredible. There's gotta be some sort of groundswell I would hope.

Pete Hoekstra ([37:06](#)):

There is. I was always surprised the elites in the Netherlands, the media, they didn't like Donald Trump. They didn't like Conservatives. And they really didn't like a Conservative Dutch guy which I am, I was born there. It's kind of like, "Pete, how did you go off the rails? How did you end up being a Conservative?" But I had always thrilled Diane and myself when we we'd be going around the Netherlands because I did a lot of grassroots stuff, interacting with Dutch folks. And the number of Dutch that would come up to me and say, "Pete, we can't say this publicly but yeah, we really like what Trump is doing." Because they look at Brussels, all right? Decisions that used to be made in the Hague

are now being made in Brussels through this bureaucracy and this commission that they feel totally disconnected from. They don't know the people there. And then they look at the policies and say, "Well, these are crazy."

Bill Walton ([38:02](#)):

You were over there firsthand looking at what's going on with Brussels and the EU and the whole Brexit situation. I mean, where is that going? Is there any opportunities for freedom in Europe? Is there any desire to break free from that?

Pete Hoekstra ([38:17](#)):

Well, it's interesting. Number one, a lot of people will just look and see what happens with Britain. Okay? Is it going to be successful for them? And the EU is doing everything that they can to make sure that it fails.

Bill Walton ([38:29](#)):

Including the elites in Britain.

Pete Hoekstra ([38:31](#)):

Yeah. They want it to fail and they want them coming back on their hands and knees in five or 10 years saying, "Oh, can we please come back in?" I talked to the countries that you would think would be most likely, Hungary, Poland, who are fighting with the EU because the EU wants to promote social issues on them. "Hey, you got to be more open to abortion. You got to be more open to the open border concept," and these types of things. But, Hungary and Poland and those countries, I talked with our ambassadors about this said "Are you going to go one of these days because of the pressure you're getting from the EU? Are you going to go and ask it out?" And it's kind of "Pete, we've been trying for so long to get in." Because you know-

Bill Walton ([39:22](#)):

The economic benefits are huge.

Pete Hoekstra ([39:23](#)):

The economic benefit and the security benefit because they're still afraid of a Russian influence, that we can't go there. But we're going to fight the EU on these issues because we don't want to become Europeanized like some of these other like France or Germany and these kinds of. We want to maintain our national identity. I think they're going to have trouble doing it because there's going to be more and more pressure coming out of Brussels for these countries to conform. And they're going to start withholding money and those types of things and saying, "You're not going to get these resources until you change your behavior and you begin to align with what we in Brussels want you to do."

Bill Walton ([40:05](#)):

You mentioned Russia, threat assessment. I mean you were both in a position to weigh this one. Russia, which we're told is just doing everything. They're terrible. China, I mean in terms of scale of one to 10, what do Americans need to be worried about?

Pete Hoekstra ([40:22](#)):

China needs to be a 10 because they're much bigger. They're much more powerful. They're more cunning. And I think they're willing to do things that will cost, I think with COVID may cost their people two or three million lives and they don't care if it helps advance their agenda. Russia doesn't have the ... It has a great ability to be a disruptor, but it doesn't have the ability to be as big of a change agent. But Putin will continue disrupting. But I don't think he has the capability to be the kind of change agent that China can.

Fred Fleitz ([41:04](#)):

Oh absolutely. Russia is a declining power for demographic reasons. It has an economy that is totally dependent upon resources. If the price of oil goes down that that economy may just shut down. But China is very different with a robust economy, a robust banking section, a growing military. We know that Russia is trying to grow its military. China's growing its military, its nuclear weapons, its Navy its army at a much faster pace. It is a very serious immediate threat and a long-term threat. It is an existential threat to our security. I don't think Russia is. Russia has the largest nuclear arsenal on earth. It can't be disregarded. It can cause a lot of trouble, but the main threat to our security is not white supremacism, it is China.

Bill Walton ([41:51](#)):

Were we open with the concern about the defense establishment, intelligence establishment focusing on domestic terrorists? And are they paying any attention, serious attention to China? I mean, do we have people inside the organizations that are protecting us?

Pete Hoekstra ([42:09](#)):

Well, I think the direction that's coming from the White House at this point in time is actually moving those and targeting them against Americans. These are not organizations that have unlimited resources. There's only so much that they can do. And I think the DNI recently at their oversight hearing was unwilling to say that they would not use any resources to target America.

Bill Walton ([42:43](#)):

Jerry Boykin was here recently, he ran Delta Forces and Green Berets and he said because of all the war training, they're seriously damaging the fighting capability of our combat troops. Just as you pointed out, it's a matter of time and resources and they're shifting time and resources to this non-kinetic stuff and they're forgetting their main job.

Fred Fleitz ([43:12](#)):

Yeah. You know, it was so troubling to hear that intelligence agencies were putting white supremacy as the top national security threat that. Just shows these agencies are politicizing what they're coming out with to keep a democratic president happy. It's completely outrageous. And there was an interesting development just before President Trump left office, when the DNI John Ratcliffe said that intelligence analysts were slanting their analysis of China during the Trump presidency to not put out intelligence that the Chinese wanted to affect the outcome of the 2020 election. And playing up intelligence that Russia did because they didn't like Trump. And this was not just from Ratcliffe. It was from an ombudsman who was reviewing the politicization of intelligence. That there was actually pressure on analysts to say certain things for political reasons. This does enormous damage to the reputation of our intelligence community. And how will future Republican presidents, how can they trust our intelligence agencies if that kind of stuff was going on?

Pete Hoekstra ([44:16](#)):

Yeah after I left Congress, I still had some folks that continue to send me intelligence today. And they made it very clear that as the COVID pandemic developed, the Chinese saw a real opportunity not only to gain economically, it moved their vision forward in terms of being A or the dominant world power. They ultimately also recognized that this would be a way to defeat Donald Trump. They were involved in this election. They wanted to make sure that Donald Trump was not elected because he was holding them accountable on a whole range of issues. I mean, him and Mike Pompeo there was a synergy that flowed out of the state department at those two levels, not every level. In between there were lots of state department people that were feeling lots of heartburn. But Pompeo and Donald Trump were very, very clear on what they wanted to happen in China and what they wanted to happen in Europe.

Bill Walton ([45:25](#)):

What I'm hearing and feeling from you is that similar to what's going on. I mean, we've got this H.R. 1 bill to federalize their elections so they make sure they never lose another election. Now they've gone to this other one, the John Lewis law which would put everything inside the justice department terrible stuff. But they're working like mad to make sure that never happens again. I'm hearing from you feeling that, that energy is still inside the intelligence agencies that they never want to lose control to somebody like Trump again. True?

Pete Hoekstra ([45:59](#)):

Yeah. I mean at the leadership spots.

Bill Walton ([46:03](#)):

Okay. We got a lot of work to do guys. What's your shop? You've just become head of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee. What's our mission here? What do we want to make happen?

Pete Hoekstra ([46:18](#)):

Well we have a program, the Shadow National Security Council project-

Bill Walton ([46:23](#)):

Shadow National Security.

Pete Hoekstra ([46:24](#)):

To hold Biden accountable, to keep our nation safe and free. We're going after his nominees, looking at his policies. We're mostly looking at China. We're trying to give information to Congress to scrutinize this administration's policies. We're going over, we'd like to change those policies to make them better. I think that's going to be a tough haul. But I think we're doing important work getting our message out to members of Congress and to the media.

Bill Walton ([46:48](#)):

And we can all find you at?

Pete Hoekstra ([46:50](#)):

Securefreedom.org is our website, securefreedom.org.

Bill Walton ([46:53](#)):

Okay. I encourage everybody watching and listening to go to that website and take in what's what's being done there. It's a real beacon for freedom and unlike some people that just talk about it, you all are doing something about it, which is great. So we run out of time. That happened last time. We got to continue, we've-

Pete Hoekstra ([47:16](#)):

We'll come back.

Bill Walton ([47:17](#)):

You're going to come back and we'll come back and we'll come back and we'll do more. Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, thank you. Fred Fleitz, thank you. You've been watching the Bill Walton show, which you can find it the billwaltonshow.com and all the other major podcast platforms, including YouTube for the time being. And we'll be picking up this conversations and other related topics in future episodes. So we'll, we'll see you soon. Thanks.

I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more, click the subscribe button or head over to the billwaltonshow.com to choose from over a 100 episodes. You can also learn more about our guests on our interesting people page. And send us your comments, we read everyone and your thoughts help us guide the show. If it's easier for you to listen, check out our podcast page and subscribe there. In return, we'll keep you informed about what's true, what's right, and what's next. Thanks for joining.