

Episode 155: Pete Hoekstra

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 ([00:25](#)):

We're back today with our friend, Pete Hoekstra, Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, to talk about national security threats to America, where we are, and where we hope to go from here. As you all know, he was chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Ambassador to the Netherlands, and he's chairman of the Center for Security Policies, Board of Advisors, Pete, welcome.

Pete Hoekstra ([00:49](#)):

It's great to be back. Thank you.

Bill Walton ([00:50](#)):

Okay. It's great to have you back. And I'm very involved with the Center for Security Policy, and Pete's a key player there. And we want to make this part of our regular conversation about how to save America from all the forces of evil out there. We got to talking-

Pete Hoekstra ([01:07](#)):

There are plenty of those, I guess.

Bill Walton ([01:08](#)):

We got to talking before the show, and let's go big picture here. You've been involved in this for decades, and you've been assessing security risks in both internal and external. What are the big things that worry you right now?

Pete Hoekstra ([01:25](#)):

The big things that worry me and part of it is what's coming out of the Biden administration. At the UN recently, the president addressed the UN, his big UNGA speech, as they call it. And painfully, I watched it twice because after watching it the first time live, I said, "I think he just said, 'We're not at war.'" And I had to go back through, and I watched it again to find if he really said that.

Pete Hoekstra ([01:54](#)):

And the disappointing thing was he did say it, and he said it at the 32-minute mark of a 33-minute speech. So I had to listen to the speech twice, but. And we focused on this at the Center for Security Policy for a long time with Frank Gaffney and now Fred Fleitz. The radical jihadist, the Muslim extremist, who are the protectors of the faith, when we left Afghanistan, they didn't say, "Ah, the war is over." They still want to establish the caliphate. They still want to kill the infidels. And they are in a better position to do that today than perhaps at any time since 2001. They have Afghanistan back. They have \$85 billion worth of American equipment. And I think most people in America recognize this threat.

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

The second threat is, I think that... I listened to Ted's Cruz speak at a Republican conference in Michigan recently, and Ted made two statements. He said, "I'm going to start off by telling you the truth. And the first thing is, America is a great country." Because obviously, even that concept is under attack today. But he said, "America is a great country." And then he said, "And the Chinese are bastards." And it's like, "Whoa, you don't usually hear this at a Republican conference or a politician being that blunt."

Pete Hoekstra ([03:26](#)):

But when you talk about the genocide, when you talk about the organ-harvesting, and those types of things, but when you talk about what they're doing economically, China is a huge threat to us. And we underestimate this threat. Personally, I believe that they've gone as far as they didn't intentionally release the Wuhan virus. It escaped from their lab. But once it was out, they recognized that they had an opportunity to move their agenda forward. And they let this escape. They facilitated the spread of the Wuhan virus to the rest of the world because they knew that America and Europe, we would respond very differently than what they would. They don't care if they lose another three, four, 5 million people. We care about every single individual.

Bill Walton ([04:14](#)):

Well, no, they don't. But it was hardly nuanced. I mean, they stopped all the flights internal in China. But if you wanted to go to Switzerland or California, go. And so they just basically put people on planes and said, "Let's see what happens."

Pete Hoekstra ([04:31](#)):

Yeah. And Italy.

Bill Walton ([04:35](#)):

And Italy. Yeah. Northern Italy

Pete Hoekstra ([04:36](#)):

Northern Italy, which I never knew. It's, "Why did this thing break out in Northern Italy?" There are a tremendous number of Chinese workers in Northern Italy. And they were there. They were home for the Chinese New Year, and the Chinese let them go back to Italy. And that's why you had the huge outbreak beginning in Italy.

Bill Walton ([04:56](#)):

Well, the thing about China, they talk about their three warfares or four warfares. I've forgotten how many warfares. There are a lot of them. There's obviously kinetic warfare, but there's economic, there's cultural, there's law. And they're using all these tools to win. And they've done a successful job infiltrating our media, our intellectual establishments. So when Trump was president, he wanted to call it Chinese virus, that was politically incorrect, and they were behind not letting us call it what it is.

Pete Hoekstra ([05:32](#)):

Absolutely. Through American corporations, through American media, and these types of things. And we called the Spanish flu, the Spanish flu, but you couldn't call the Wuhan virus, the Wuhan virus then. They're players in the WHO. And this is why I think you've seen some of the things with Dr. Fauci and

others. Think about this Bill, the United States Congress approved money to go to Dr. Fauci for research. And he sent some of that money to the Wuhan Virology Lab, America fund.

Pete Hoekstra ([06:20](#)):

And you sit there and say, "Who in the United States would think that sending money to a military lab controlled by the Chinese communist party was a good idea?" Who would say, "Yeah, we can work with these folks on these deadly coronaviruses and these types of things"? And the bottom line is it's some of our chief medical officers who made that decision, scary. And then they tried to hide it. Remember Dr. Fauci on TV saying, "Senator, you are the only liar in this room." I think he was talking to Senator Rand Paul.

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

Strong stuff.

Pete Hoekstra ([07:08](#)):

Strong stuff.

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

I don't know how close you were. Why did Trump trust him so much? Why did he give him so much power?

Pete Hoekstra ([07:15](#)):

President Trump has never been the best evaluator of talent.

Bill Walton ([07:25](#)):

Well.

Pete Hoekstra ([07:26](#)):

Okay. He continued to go with... We saw the state department, stuff that we would send into the state department. It would go into people that we would identify as never Trumpers. And it would, it's, "Why are they screening stuff or providing us direction and those kinds of things?" I think the president... I don't know why specifically on Fauci and all of that. But as we've now seen, later on, Dr. Fauci was a political animal and someone who was more than willing to undercut the president of the United States of America.

Bill Walton ([08:07](#)):

Yeah. Coming back to your first point about we are not at war, we obviously are at war. Where do you see this going in Afghanistan now that we've pulled up roots there?

Pete Hoekstra ([08:19](#)):

Well, the narrative is the Taliban is going to be a reformed Taliban. They've been very gentlemanly-like since we've been negotiating with them.

Bill Walton ([08:33](#)):

Didn't they just hang four people in a square?

Pete Hoekstra (08:36):

They hung four people.

Bill Walton (08:37):

So they only hung four.

Pete Hoekstra (08:38):

They only hung four.

Bill Walton (08:38):

That's kinder and gentler. It wasn't 40.

Pete Hoekstra (08:40):

Those are the four we know about.

Bill Walton (08:41):

All right. Yeah. Okay.

Pete Hoekstra (08:42):

Remember, somebody's put a whole blanket over Afghanistan.

Bill Walton (08:46):

Really.

Pete Hoekstra (08:46):

Because the news coming out, but I talked to Sharon Spann last week. And so, who is Sharon Spann? Her husband is Michael, CIA guy. One of the horsemen that went into Afghanistan almost immediately after 9/11. One of the first guy, no, not one of, the first American killed in Afghanistan. She was also part of the intelligence community. And so, and she's married now. She's remarried to a former agent who worked in Afghanistan. And they're saying, "There's a difference between Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and this ISIS-K that they're talking about, but they have a whole lot more in common than what separates them. They all hate us. They want to destroy us." So they see Afghanistan going back to being a safe haven for terrorists to plan, prepare, train, to attack us again, whether it's in Europe, whether it's in Africa, or whether it's in the Homeland, so that's a given.

Pete Hoekstra (09:59):

They are totally distraught because they're the ones that went and recruited local Afghans to be our eyes and ears in the country to keep the country secure, safe. And when you go in, and you're recruiting, you say, "Don't worry, trust us. We will not desert you. We will protect you." And we've now left thousands of those people behind, so they are going to get hung. They're going to get tortured. And she said, "I'm getting contacted all the time from people that I know or people that knew Michael saying,

'Help us. Get us out.'" So now Afghanistan is going to become the hotbed of radical jihadist groups because they now see it as a safe haven.

Pete Hoekstra ([10:54](#)):

And what happened is they see this as a replicating what happened with the Soviet Union. Remember, they beat the Soviets in Afghanistan, and a short time later, the Soviet Union collapsed. And so they're enthused. They're motivated. And they're saying, "It's going to be the same thing all over. We defeated the Americans here in Afghanistan. And if we keep the pressure on, we will now defeat and take down the great Satan," which I'm not sure if they ever believed that they could. It's always been their motivation, but when we were there killing them and taking out bin Laden and keeping the pressure on, that's what their goal was, but I'm not ever sure that they believed it was an achievable goal. Now, all of a sudden, it looks achievable. So they're motivated in Afghanistan. They're motivated in Iraq. They're motivated in Northern Africa and Nigeria, and all of these places. Because look, "We beat the great Satan."

Bill Walton ([12:01](#)):

Well, picking up the way we did and leaving completely, leaving Bagram Air Base, abandoning the embassy, leaving not a single American in there except for those who left behind. Take the army out. I think crazy. I mean, it seems to me we should have kept a footprint there. And now we've got the spectacle of the head of the joint chief of staff and our defense secretary saying, "No, no, no. We advised the president that we got to leave 2,500 troops in there. We ought to keep Bagram Air Base." And Biden has been on record as saying that nobody told him that.

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

Now they may have a chance of taking down the great Satan because we've got Joe Biden as president. I mean, the guy is... Is he? You're closer to this than I am. What's your estimate about what's really going on here? The throwing Biden under the bus the way they are. And they're pointing like this in terms of taking responsibility.

Pete Hoekstra ([13:03](#)):

Well, I've called for Blinken, Austin, and Milley, all to resign and be taken out. But what we saw in recent congressional hearings and that, they're all survivors. They know the Washington game, they are bureaucrats, and they know how to survive, and they know how to escape accountability. Now, who's in charge? Clearly, the White House is in charge. Now, whether that means Joe Biden is in charge on all of these decisions or not, I just don't know. But it's clear that you've got some chaos or uncertainty in the White House or in the top levels of this administration. It's pretty unusual where a month, six weeks after the kind of debacle that we had in Afghanistan, that you have the president and his top military advisors saying, like you said, one's pointing the fingers at the other, saying, "Well, nobody told me." And they said, "Yeah, we did. We told you what was going to happen."

Pete Hoekstra ([14:12](#)):

And the bottom line is we still have thousands of Americans there. We have thousands of Afghans who have this special immigration visa because they performed work that endangers their lives today. They're still there. I've met with some of my former counterparts from the Netherlands. They're furious with America. They're not sure that they can trust America moving forward because the way we pulled out, they left people behind. The Dutch don't have the capability to airlift out hundreds of Dutch or

Afghans who worked with the Dutch. They relied on us. They're now trying to scramble and get people out.

Pete Hoekstra ([15:01](#)):

And the message is, "Our only strategy today is, well, we're going to ask the Taliban, help get these people out." And if you're an American or if you're an Afghan and you're hearing the American president or our military leaders saying, "Don't worry, we're working with the Taliban to get you out." I'm sure there are lots of Afghans who are saying, "No, no, no, no, no, no. We don't really need that kind of help. You've already given them the list of who we are. We're not sure whether we're on that list, but don't give them any more names." And say, "Oh, can you help us get these people home?"

Bill Walton ([15:41](#)):

You're watching the Bill Walton show. I'm here with Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, and we're talking about Afghanistan in the aftermath. How many Americans do you think are still there?

Pete Hoekstra ([15:53](#)):

It's more than the 100.

Bill Walton ([15:55](#)):

Okay.

Pete Hoekstra ([15:56](#)):

Who they keep saying, "It's 100." But they're dual citizens, so for some of those, it doesn't really matter. So we're maybe worried about 40 or 50. It's in the hundreds. And it may be up to 1,000 or 2,000.

Bill Walton ([16:06](#)):

I've heard, they're like 50 school kids that are left there. Now is that?

Pete Hoekstra ([16:11](#)):

Could be.

Bill Walton ([16:11](#)):

We don't know. We don't know.

Pete Hoekstra ([16:12](#)):

Very possible.

Bill Walton ([16:12](#)):

But the thing is so troubling, and we're seeing this with-

Pete Hoekstra ([16:15](#)):

But let me go back to your comment you just said, that's important. We don't know. It's because the media has put a blanket over all reporting on what's going on in Afghanistan. If there's 50 American kids in Afghanistan-

Bill Walton ([16:32](#)):

Well.

Pete Hoekstra ([16:32](#)):

... why is the media not all over it?

Bill Walton ([16:34](#)):

Well, that's where I was going. The news blackout here, the news blackout, or you're not allowed to talk. Domestically, you're not allowed to talk about vaccines. YouTube has now said that anything talking about vaccines, that they're not a big plus, is going to get pulled. Same thing's happening in Afghanistan. Same thing's happening with a lot of things happening with China. It's just not being covered.

Pete Hoekstra ([16:56](#)):

Yeah. I mean, we start feeling like a Stalinist Marxist state where... And we have this Marine who said, "It's time for accountability." So as Milley, and Austin, and Blinken, the leaders and I don't believe they're leaders, leaders take accountability and responsibility for what they do. But this poor Marine, and he maybe spoke out of the chain of command, but he's now in prison.

Bill Walton ([17:27](#)):

Yeah. This Lieutenant Colonel Stuart Scheller, I think, is his name. And he did a YouTube video just last week saying, "This was nuts to pull out the way we did. We told him, everybody on the ground knew that this was a mistake." And I guess they told him to be quiet. And then he decided he wasn't going to be quiet. So he went ahead and put another YouTube video out, and now they've got him in jail. He's the only person who's been held responsible for anything in Afghanistan.

Pete Hoekstra ([17:56](#)):

And if anything, he's talked to his friends. I don't know if he served in Afghanistan or not. Okay?

Bill Walton ([18:03](#)):

Scheller wasn't in? I thought he was.

Pete Hoekstra ([18:05](#)):

I don't know. I don't know.

Bill Walton ([18:05](#)):

I think he was.

Pete Hoekstra ([18:06](#)):

Okay. All right.

Bill Walton ([18:06](#)):

I'm pretty sure he was. Yeah.

Pete Hoekstra ([18:08](#)):

And the Marines don't leave anybody behind. And so this guy is absolutely furious, and he's probably got friends, then in Afghanistan that have been left behind, who are calling him. And again, when I talk to Shannon Spann, they're distraught about this. These are people that they promised, "We will take care of you, and we will not leave you behind." And these are people who, for five years, 10 years, some of them, maybe for 15, did everything we asked them to do. We left Bagram in the middle of the night. The Afghans, in the Base, woke up in the morning, "Where the Americans?" "They left."

Pete Hoekstra ([18:54](#)):

I heard somebody describe it. And it's like, "Okay, here's the challenge to you as the military. You're going to have to evacuate tens of thousands of Americans, SIV holders, and the similar type of people from other countries. You can either use the equivalent of O'Hare Airport." And what we decided to do is we decided to use Midway. All right? And I don't know how many of your listeners know the difference, but Midway is smack dab in a neighborhood in Chicago, and it's got one runway.

Bill Walton ([19:37](#)):

And it's built in 1935 or something. I mean, it's just, yeah.

Pete Hoekstra ([19:40](#)):

And that's what we did in Afghanistan. We decided, well, instead of using Dulles, we're going to use National, downtown. It's like, who made this decision? Well, but no, this Marine is being held accountable. And he's in jail, and these other guys are getting a pass. And like I said, they're survivors, not leaders.

Bill Walton ([20:02](#)):

From your seat having been head of the House Intelligence Committee. Do we have any levers to hold these people accountable? I mean, are we just sitting here on the sidelines saying, "Gee, somebody should do this, but nobody is going to do it?" Are there any way the Republicans in Congress could pull themselves together to say, "We demand the resignations of Blinken, Austin, and Milley?"

Pete Hoekstra ([20:27](#)):

What I suggested is that we censure the three of them. They're approved by the Senate, so they're different than a national security advisor. But they're approved by Congress, by the Senate. There's widespread bipartisan support and acknowledgement that these guys failed to do their job. And rather than calling for their impeachment and removal in that way, I've suggested use censure. I think that's the strongest position for Republicans to take. And have the Democrats say, "No" on a motion of censure, say "Milley, you didn't do your job." Because I think the vast majority of Americans believe he didn't do his job. "Blinken, you have totally screwed this up."

Pete Hoekstra ([21:17](#)):

I think Americans would say, "Okay, fine." Because I think the impeachment thing, especially under Donald Trump, it has no meaning anymore. They rushed the second one through. And no hearings, and we're going to impeach the guy. It's become too political. But I think, if you step back at this point and offer a motion of censure and if these three individuals were actually censured by Congress, they would resign because a motion of censure would say we've lost confidence in you to effect-

Bill Walton ([21:50](#)):

Who in Congress would lead that? Who do we need to reach out to, to say?

Pete Hoekstra ([21:56](#)):

We would take anybody. Okay?

Bill Walton ([21:58](#)):

Okay. Then you don't have any obvious candidates to-

Pete Hoekstra ([22:01](#)):

Well, no, I mean, you got people, a Josh Hawley, a Tom Cotton, a Ted Cruz, a Marsha Blackburn, a senator, whatever to take this up. There should be something that Kevin McCarthy in the House of Representatives... The minority leader should go and say, "We're going to press Nancy Pelosi to make this decision. We want to vote."

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

We're fighting our war for freedom on a lot of fronts. I mean, we talk about Afghanistan, obviously, but we're also fighting at home. I mean, this reconciliation bill is the FDR and the Johnson's Great Society and really, maybe Trotsky's dream about a Marxist society, all rolled into one bill.

Pete Hoekstra ([22:52](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([22:52](#)):

We've got \$5 trillion in the cards. We've got an infrastructure bill that's tied to that. And so you got the guys you just mentioned. They're supposedly fighting the fight to keep us from bankrupting the country.

Pete Hoekstra ([23:06](#)):

Right. And we'll see how this plays out in the coming days and weeks. It's not going to all be resolved all very quickly. But you got the Democrats saying, "96% of the Democrats support this," which is scary. This really is a social, as you said, with the reconciliation and the infrastructure, you're five, \$6 trillion. That's only for the next four or five years. What is missing is when I was in Washington talking to some of the former colleagues about this, they said, "We've got Republicans who are going to vote for this infrastructure bill, and they're going to vote for it at a time where if Nancy can't pass the infrastructure bill, she's not going to get any of it." She's looking for a life ring.

Pete Hoekstra ([23:55](#)):

And the amazing thing is that sometime in the near future, we may find that the people that tossed her the life ring were 15 or 20 Republicans who gave her the votes to actually pass this. And if that happens, I have no idea what happens to the Republican party, all right? Because Republicans will say, "Who is...?" And I hear it all the time. "Who's there fighting for us?" And if we throw Nancy Pelosi a life ring, they're just going to say, "We give up."

Bill Walton ([24:30](#)):

Are these 15 to 20 Republicans in the House or these-

Pete Hoekstra ([24:34](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Walton ([24:34](#)):

In the House?

Pete Hoekstra ([24:35](#)):

I don't think there'll be any in the Senate that would break. No.

Bill Walton ([24:37](#)):

We were joking before we came on air. I started this program a few years ago to get informed and help other people get informed about what's going on. And the more programs I do, the more I get depressed. I mean, I'm looking for how do we? What's our line of action here? How do we? Is there a-

Pete Hoekstra ([25:01](#)):

Elections have consequences. We lost the election in 2020. We can argue. We can discuss how we lost it and all those kinds of things. But the bottom line is we lost it. You would think that at this point, we'd be doing everything to slow, stop, block the democratic agenda. And because I don't believe this is an agenda that the American people agree with. Whether it's foreign policy, the American people know that we're still at war with the radical jihadist. They know that China is a threat. And they know that 5 trillion or 5 trillion, it's hard to say that word, isn't it? \$5 trillion more of spending is not sustainable. We don't have the resources. And what we've heard in recent days, Nancy Pelosi and the president saying, "This will cost us..." How much did he say it would cost us? Did you see it?

Bill Walton ([26:08](#)):

Oh, it's not going to cost us anything.

Pete Hoekstra ([26:09](#)):

Zero.

Bill Walton ([26:10](#)):

It's not going to cost us-

Pete Hoekstra ([26:11](#)):

Zero.

Bill Walton ([26:11](#)):

... nothing. It's nothing.

Pete Hoekstra ([26:12](#)):

It's not going to cost us anything.

Bill Walton ([26:13](#)):

No.

Pete Hoekstra ([26:13](#)):

It's like, "Wow." How can it not cost us anything?

Bill Walton ([26:18](#)):

Well, money's just a construct. It doesn't really matter.

Pete Hoekstra ([26:24](#)):

Or they're saying, "Yeah, well, okay. Maybe it's only going to be the really, really wealthy that are going to pay." I'm sorry. They don't have that much money. And even if they did, it totally changes our way of life. But the concept that they believe that they can go to the American people and actually say, "This is going to cost us zero." It's like...

Bill Walton ([26:48](#)):

Well, we know that's not true. And we know reality will bite. We know that we're now reaching \$28 trillion in debt. We keep doing this. We could reach 50 trillion in debt in the next 10 years or so. We know that if interest rates go up, that the interest rate on the federal debt will get to the point where we can't do anything else except-

Pete Hoekstra ([27:12](#)):

Pay debt.

Bill Walton ([27:12](#)):

... pay interest on the debt. We need some grown-ups.

Pete Hoekstra ([27:19](#)):

There were people that were saying, "The grown-ups are coming back in the room when Joe Biden." But again, I've met with my Dutch counterparts and other friends from Europe. This is a total surprise. That they did not expect this, they did not expect to be blindsided by President Biden, just pulling out of Afghanistan.

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

You're watching the Bill Walton Show. I'm here talking with Ambassador Pete Hoekstra. And we're concluding that when Joe Biden said, "The grown-ups are back in charge," he didn't have himself in mind.

Pete Hoekstra ([27:46](#)):

Yeah, no, that's right. I remember when I was in the Netherlands, President Trump said, "We're pulling our troops out of Syria." The Europeans protested, and Donald Trump changed his mind. He took their feedback and left a small residual force of Americans in Syria. When the Europeans went to Joe Biden and said, "You got to leave some troops here in Afghanistan. So we can get our people out. Keep them here for another 30 or 60 days, but let us get our people out."

Pete Hoekstra ([28:29](#)):

And I don't think our military went to him and said that. I don't know if they told him we were going to leave Americans behind. But when the Europeans came to him and said, "Leave a residual force until we get our people out and then pull out." The president said, "No, I'm pulling out when I'm pulling out." And so, our European allies are furious. He's no longer welcomed in the club, as he, Macron, so famously said what? Three or four months ago, or three or four months in the presidency when he met with him. And Macron said, "Welcome back to the club." And it's like, "God." I was there. "Mr. President, we don't want to be part of this club."

Bill Walton ([29:13](#)):

Okay. So he's lost the international opinion, good opinion, which they all been thinking he's so terrific. You and I don't.

Pete Hoekstra ([29:22](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([29:24](#)):

His favorability ratings in the polls have dropped to 40%.

Pete Hoekstra ([29:30](#)):

It's hard to find those 40.

Bill Walton ([29:32](#)):

I want to know who those 40 are-

Pete Hoekstra ([29:33](#)):

I want to know who those 40 are, yeah.

Bill Walton ([29:33](#)):

... but that's a different question. And his cognitive skills are obviously gone. I mean, it seems to me push is going to come to shove, and we're going to have some sort of crisis of leadership here where even the Dems are going to say, "Look, we need to make a change here because this guy is..." He's made blunder after blunder after blunder. And we say elections. Election's still over a year off.

Pete Hoekstra ([30:01](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([30:01](#)):

That's just a [crosstalk 00:30:03].

Pete Hoekstra ([30:03](#)):

That's a long time.

Bill Walton ([30:04](#)):

It's a long time. Have a crystal ball?

Pete Hoekstra ([30:08](#)):

I mean, the thing that you can hope for is that the Democrats in the House, which is I think is the most likely place, although you may pick a few more senators, actually recognize how scary this is. But like I said, they estimate... AOC comes out and says, "Hey, 96% of the Democrats agree with this agenda. They agree with the five, \$6 trillion worth of spending." It used to be that you would find maybe 30% who would be so far out on a branch for that kind of spending. And it would be the 60 or 70% of the moderate Democrats in the middle will say, "Well, we'll humor you for a little while, but eventually, we're going to come back, and it's going to be at maybe another trillion dollars, but it's not going to be another three and a half."

Bill Walton ([31:05](#)):

I just, well, let me...

Pete Hoekstra ([31:09](#)):

Well, at least we got you smiling.

Bill Walton ([31:11](#)):

Well, I've always wondered about who's in Congress. It seems to me that we have a lot of people that for one reason or another, their careers allowed them to skip a math class. I mean, do individual congressmen really understand what's at stake with these numbers? And these programs, it's not just the spending. It's the programs that get created that last. They never go away once you put it in place. And they're doing little things like adding dental to Medicare. When Medicare is on the verge of going broke in the next five years or so. I mean, well-

Pete Hoekstra ([31:46](#)):

There's a couple of things that happened that-

Bill Walton ([31:49](#)):

People just get so overwhelmed by these numbers and being in the dark that they just don't think they can weigh in?

Pete Hoekstra ([31:55](#)):

No, I think on the Republican side, you've got a lot of business people, so they know numbers.

Bill Walton ([32:00](#)):

Okay. All right.

Pete Hoekstra ([32:01](#)):

What I was always amazed about is I worked at Herman Miller, the office furniture company.

Bill Walton ([32:08](#)):

Well, you were a businessman. You ran a big chunk of the business.

Pete Hoekstra ([32:09](#)):

Yeah. I worked on new product development in marketing. So I launched a lot of new products. And sometimes, some of them were, we would call dogs, all right. They did not meet their objectives. And I would be held accountable, "Pete, what went wrong?" A year in, two years in, or whatever. And what did we learn from this?

Pete Hoekstra ([32:34](#)):

And so, in Congress, the success is when you pass the bill. So the success for the Democrats now will be passing this \$3.5 trillion spending bill that creates all of these new programs, and it ends there. Then there's no oversight. These programs are created. And we recognize that a lot of them don't ever work. We never kill them. We hardly ever reform them because there's no accountability.

Pete Hoekstra ([33:05](#)):

Once they get into the bureaucracy, congressmen and women have their pet projects. And so, well, you can't kill that scholarship program. It has that member's name on it. And so, the ability to hold people accountable and to hold programs accountable for the results that they deliver does not take place. So you never kill a program because you always can find somebody in America who benefits from the program, who gets a check or whatever. That's the problem. You just keep layering on top. It's frightening.

Bill Walton ([33:51](#)):

Well, and isn't it also true that these bills are no longer very specific. They sort of put an intention in there, and then they kick it over to an agency. "You do the details."

Pete Hoekstra ([34:01](#)):

You implement it. Yeah, that's right.

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

Now, I wonder, is that deliberate, so that a Congressman who votes for something can say, "Well, I voted for the general idea, but I didn't mean that they would ever do this."

Pete Hoekstra ([34:12](#)):

Sure.

Bill Walton ([34:12](#)):

So it's passing the accountability buck to the unelected, permanent bureaucracy.

Pete Hoekstra ([34:19](#)):

Right. And it's way too big. Can 100 senators manage the kind of spending that's going on, on any day? 435 members of the House. They don't have the capability and logistics. I mean, when I chaired the Intel Committee, we maybe had 30, 40 staff to look at spending that was \$85 billion. You can't do it.

Bill Walton ([34:49](#)):

No, you can't do it at all. Well, when I first got engaged in political activity, the rage was term limits. And if you have term limits only in Congress or for X number of years. I no longer think term limits are

necessarily the end-all and be-all. I tend to think a lot of the problems in the staff that never goes away and in the permanent bureaucracy and the agencies. I mean, is that a...?

Pete Hoekstra ([35:17](#)):

Yeah, I agree with you. I mean, and I was an advocate of term limits, longer-term limits, 12 or 14, 16 years. But the permanent staff is always there, and you see it more now. There's too many of them, staff and members, who are looking for their next job. And that's the private sector over whom they have oversight, but they also are looking towards for their next job.

Pete Hoekstra ([36:04](#)):

Before I became chairman of the Intel Committee, I chaired a subcommittee on satellites, overhead. We paid, and we built for satellites. And there was a program that was going to be a 10-year program. And let's round the numbers off, 10-year program for \$10 billion. And one day Porter Goss, who was chairman of the committee, came to me and said, "Pete, will you take a look at this program?" One more time. And this is the third or fourth time this happened. They've just come back and said, "It's going to take another year and another billion dollars." So we're now to a 14-year program and a 14 billion program. "Will you take a look at this and see whether it will ever work?" Brought in all the experts from the company, from the bureaucracy. And they said, "Yeah, Pete, we're there. This is the last time we're going to ask. We can promise you. This is the last time we're going to ask."

Pete Hoekstra ([37:07](#)):

And then we brought in outside experts and said, "You assess this program." And they came back and said, "Pete, the program's never going to fly. It's way too complicated. It's way too cutting edge." And of course, these are people who want to do cutting edge, and you need to do cutting edge. But they said, "This will never happen." We killed it.

Bill Walton ([37:36](#)):

Good for you.

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

And I can tell you once I left Congress, [inaudible 00:37:41] back. That company never called and said, "Hey, Pete, how would you like to consult for us?"

Bill Walton ([37:46](#)):

Oh, that's true. Yeah.

Pete Hoekstra ([37:48](#)):

Okay. It was, they wouldn't even return a phone call.

Bill Walton ([37:51](#)):

I see.

Pete Hoekstra ([37:53](#)):

Now, if we'd kept that project, I'd probably be working for them for a couple 100,000, three, 400,000 a year, and life would be... Life is good right now. I've got no complaints.

Bill Walton ([38:05](#)):

Well, you're a freedom fighter.

Pete Hoekstra ([38:06](#)):

Yeah, we did.

Bill Walton ([38:08](#)):

And we need more freedom fighters.

Pete Hoekstra ([38:09](#)):

And what we need on the Republican side is we need cause people. People who are committed to the cause rather than committed to being in Congress. Being in Congress was not the best job I ever had. It was a great job.

Bill Walton ([38:25](#)):

I bet Herman Miller was a better job.

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

Herman Miller was a great company. It was a great company. And you never know what's going to happen in private, but I think I could have had a much longer and more successful career at Herman Miller. But I never regret the move that I made into Congress. But you don't look at it and say, "Wow, this is the best job I've ever had."

Bill Walton ([38:51](#)):

I think it'd be very frustrating.

Pete Hoekstra ([38:53](#)):

Yes, it is. Yeah.

Bill Walton ([38:56](#)):

So we're going to come back time and time again. We are going to make progress. We are going to make America free again.

Pete Hoekstra ([39:04](#)):

Yes, absolutely.

Bill Walton ([39:05](#)):

So what? Take us out a little bit. What should we be hoping for happens next?

Pete Hoekstra ([39:14](#)):

The elections matter. We need to have a successful 2022. We need to take back at least one of the Houses of Congress. And we then need to elect the leaders that will fight for our cause. Between now and then, we got to do everything we can to motivate grassroots Americans, educate them, let them know what's going on.

Pete Hoekstra ([39:54](#)):

One of the people that was voting for the infrastructure bill and throwing Nancy Pelosi the life ring is a good friend of mine. He's from Michigan. I did a radio interview. I called him out. And one of the things that I'm hoping is that there'll be hundreds, if not thousands, of people in his congressional district who will be calling his office and saying, "What are you doing? We know you're more of a moderate, but, wait a minute, you're crossing a line here. We've supported you in the past. But if you throw Nancy Pelosi and Joe Biden in this massive socialist agenda, if you're the one throwing them the life ring. I'm sorry, we're done."

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

We got to be as militant as what the left is on this. We have to have the passion and the energy, and we can do it in very constructive ways. But we have to demonstrate the same passion and energy that they do. And that we can do right now.

Bill Walton ([40:58](#)):

I agree. I'm with you. We will win.

Pete Hoekstra ([41:04](#)):

I'm optimistic. They say it's a pendulum, but the bottom line is these values work. But I will tell you the last hope for freedom is the conservative movement in America versus globalism. The elimination of the nation-state, moving our sovereignty into global organizations. You don't find that movement in Europe. We either need to be successful, or we will be run by global organizations. That is what they want. And the last hope and the only thing standing before it is the conservative movement in the US. It's scary. It's not like we got a bunch of allies in other parts of the world. It's us. That's the motivating factor. If not us, then who?

Bill Walton ([42:01](#)):

Ambassador Pete Hoekstra, thank you. This was great, really, really. And you obviously care a lot, and I'm glad you're doing what you're doing, and I'm glad you stayed in the fight, and I'm glad you killed that program.

Pete Hoekstra ([42:14](#)):

Yeah.

Bill Walton ([42:14](#)):

So we could keep you at Center for Security Policy. So-

Pete Hoekstra ([42:17](#)):

Right, right.

Bill Walton ([42:17](#)):

... anyway, thanks for being with us.

Pete Hoekstra ([42:18](#)):

Good to be with you. Thank you.

Bill Walton ([42:20](#)):

Yeah. Thank you. And you've been watching the Bill Walton Show, and you can find the show on CPAC NOW, on Monday nights at seven o'clock and also, we're on all the major webcast/podcast platforms, and stay tuned. And we'll have Ambassador Hoekstra back and other people talking about national defense and the issues we face. So thanks for joining.

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

I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more? Click the Subscribe button or head over to thebillwaltonshow.com to choose from over 100 episodes. You can also learn more about our guest on our Interesting People page. And send us your comments. We read every one, 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.