

Episode 181: "A Brave New - and More Dangerous - World" with Brandon Weichert

Bill Walton ([00:01](#)):

When Al Regnery said, "Gee, you ought to interview this, this author, Brandon Weichert who's written this book space warfare." I thought, "Wow, I'm really interested in that, that's a big topic." And then I went on your website and then I started looking at some YouTubes and I realized, "No, wait a second. You know everything about Russia, China, Eurasia, our nuclear capabilities and you're also an historian. I mean, one of the things I like about what you've done is you've written so many, you go deeply into the Napoleon or the Roman empire to tie this all together. And it's really great.

Brandon Weichert ([00:45](#)):

Well, thank you. Thank you. By the way-

Bill Walton ([00:48](#)):

How did you become such a polymath?

Brandon Weichert ([00:50](#)):

I don't know. I come from a pretty simple middle class background I just, I was always... I mean, my grandfather helped to raise me and he was a very deep student of history and I remember as a little kid, always hearing stories of his time in the service and he was a cold warrior and I just was raised with an interest in history and at a very early age. And ever since then, it just sort of snowballed into me following that trajectory. And I don't know because I was an okay student in high school, I was an okay student in undergrad. And then I got into my master's program and I really just kind of became on fire for these subjects. I went to of the Institute of World Politics in Washington, DC, which is a small program.

Brandon Weichert ([01:48](#)):

And I went there because I was working on The Hill at the time. A lot of my interns were going there and they were like, "You got to come. It's really cool." And so I went and I got one-on-one training with some really incredible academics who were scholar practitioners, they're very proud of that in the intelligence field, and then got to go to Oxford for a period of time. It was like an awakening. And I just, I've always been interested in these things and I find patterns and I write about the patterns I see and people seem to like it, so I keep doing it.

Bill Walton ([02:22](#)):

Well, let's get started.

Brandon Weichert ([02:25](#)):

Yeah.

Speaker 3 ([02:28](#)):

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 ([02:49](#)):

Welcome to the Bill Walton Show. I'm Bill Walton with Ukraine and Russia much in the news. One of the things that I get very concerned about is this going to lead us into a World War III? It seems like we may be backing Vladimir Putin into a corner, a corner where he can't be seen to be losing. And I'm worried about the kind of capabilities which the Russians may unleash and they have not unleashed most of what they have to unleash what might happen next. And my friend Al Regnery recommended, I talk with a brilliant guy, Brandon Weichert, although he's been introduced as a brilliant in anxiety inducing scholar.

Bill Walton ([03:34](#)):

He's a geopolitical, geotechnology analyst. He worked on the congressional staff. He's an advisor to the US military and a lot of technology firms, and his expertise is space, space warfare, Russia, China, China, Eurasia has also got a deep knowledge of history. His book, which we will talk about, but it's a part of the conversation is called Winning Space: How America Remains a Superpower. Brandon, where do we start? Let's get into it. Let's first start with where we are right now today and Ukraine and Russia. You've been writing extensively about that, where do you think we are?

Brandon Weichert ([04:20](#)):

Well, the first thing we have to acknowledge is that since the COVID-19 virus was loose upon the world, either intentionally or accidentally from Wuhan, China, we're not living in the world that you and I came up in, certainly me, that I came up in that sort of post Cold War or unipolar world system that's gone, it's not coming back. And so we're in a new world now and that new world is going to look a lot like the world that came before 1945, which is kind of scary. And so what we're seeing in Ukraine, in my opinion, this Russo-Ukrainian conflict is, but the first of many conflicts that will emanate over the next decade, I call in my book, the 2020s, the decade of concern. And I think that if we can get through this decade, we might be able to find a more stable, more prosperous period in the 2030s and beyond.

Brandon Weichert ([05:18](#)):

But the 2020s are going to be a most unstable decade and you're seeing that now. And so the Russo-Ukrainian conflict is, but the first of many territorial sort of old school, old world conflicts of the sort that we thought we wouldn't have to see ever again, certainly in Europe sort of post-historical, post-modern Europe, it's happening there first in many respects and it will propagate outward from there. And so that's sort of the big picture is that we're in a new world order, it's really a disorder, there is no one single power anymore. And you're seeing now this sense of opportunity for the world's great military powers, whether it be the United States, Russia or China, primarily those three powers, but Russia now is the first to take advantage of what they think is a window of opportunity. And they're going to push and push and push and push until pushing through mush, probing with bayonets until they hit steel.

Brandon Weichert ([06:16](#)):

And so far they've not hit steel. The Ukrainians are doing a bang up job of really trying to hold their own. But ultimately, as you noted, the Russians have not fully deployed all of their capabilities. And I don't know if they're going to because ultimately, Putin only wants the Eastern portion of Ukraine, that is his primary objective, everything else is gravy, everything else is ancillary. So if he can maybe get Western Ukraine, he tried that, so far he can't, so I think he's recalibrating. And I think ultimately if he can get Eastern Ukraine and really formally get that recognized as part of Russia, and he's going to, I think, if he can neutralize Ukraine as being a potential member of NATO, which he will, and if he can sort of keep

pressure on Western Ukraine for the next eight years, the way he kept pressure on Eastern Ukraine over the last eight years, ultimately I think Putin thinks that he or possibly his successor will ultimately be able to cleave all of Ukraine with these salami slice tactics over time.

Bill Walton ([07:20](#)):

Well, how much of a blunder was it for us to... This is, I saw something last night, Nigel Farage who led the Brexit effort in the UK, gave a speech in 2014 at the time, I think it was Crimea that was in the headlines. And his point was that, we really brought a lot of this on ourselves because we're putting Ukraine in play right by forcing them into or inviting them into NATO. And you look at a map and I'm a wall street creature, I've done a lot of private equity and finance and things like that, I've not done a lot of geopolitical politics and strategy, but you look at a map and Ukraine sits there in the map, it looks pretty much like Texas looks to the United States. It's not exactly some remote place that they're fighting over. And by wanting Ukraine to be part of NATO, it seems you're just inviting Putin to strike back.

Brandon Weichert ([08:20](#)):

Right. And actually that's a great analogy is to Texas because geographically like Texas, Ukraine is geographically very flat. It's sort of centrally located. It's got a bunch of other places nearby that are easily accessible should you be able to invade through Ukraine, which is one of the reasons why Putin is in invading because he's ultimately trying to link his power base in Russia, not only with Ukraine, but also Transnistria, Moldova. He's also trying to, I think put pressure on Romania, which many experts believe is the weak link in the NATO Eastern flank. And ultimately this is part of a larger design to put greater pressure on Poland and to seek revenge upon Poland, I think. Yeah.

Bill Walton ([09:03](#)):

What do you think [inaudible 00:09:04] Putin's? What is he thinking right now in terms of how the West has responded, the EU, NATO, the United States, the economic sanctions, how's he feeling? How much of this did he anticipate or not?

Brandon Weichert ([09:17](#)):

Well, he anticipated a lot of it, but I think he's very surprised by how rapidly the West was able to corral itself. You have to understand the signals the West has been sending out for the last several years has been that, "We are not on the same page or allies with us and ultimately you can divide and conquer." And I think that can still possibly happen.

Bill Walton ([09:40](#)):

You mean United States was not on the same page with Europe and so and so?

Brandon Weichert ([09:45](#)):

With the European allies, yeah, particularly Germany and France. And I think that Putin just assumed, especially under Biden, who he thought was just going to give away Europe, particularly after their meeting last year in which Biden removed the Trump sanctions on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline that was linking Russian natural gas with European markets through Germany. I think the assumption on Putin's part was, "Hey, the Americans are stepping away and I think we'll run a rough shot." And I think that Moscow and the Kremlin were very surprised how quickly Europeans, not just America, but the Europeans were sort of saying, "We're not going to let this fly in Ukraine, at least now about a fight."

Bill Walton ([10:22](#)):

Wasn't the German reaction flabbergasting?

Brandon Weichert ([10:25](#)):

It was very flabbergasting. Yes. It was very flabbergasting because initially they didn't want to do anything in response to Ukraine because they need the energy from Russia and the French were sort of tagging along with the Germans. But then as time went on as the aggression was... And I think you have to understand everybody in Europe, a lot of the Western Europeans and the Southern Europeans assumed that this was all a bluff by Putin, that this was all one big negotiating tactic. And as I was writing at the time in the age of times, this was not a bluff, that this was it for Putin, that he had been making clear sense as you just noted, since the Americans were pushing Ukraine to become a NATO member publicly, we had basically removed neutrality from Ukraine, which then made it a geopolitical hot potato and so for Putin, it was, he needed to move while he thought the West was weak.

Brandon Weichert ([11:17](#)):

And he thought under Biden, the West was weak and he thought that with Germany, he could really get away with a lot, and so he was very surprised by the reaction overall by the West. Now, we still haven't gone all the way in terms of really solidifying our unity with Poland and the Eastern Europeans and so there's still weakness sign display there, but we have gone hard against Russia, harder than I thought Putin thought we would, which has forced him to recalibrate. But ultimately the question is, will he cease and desist? And I think the answer is no, because he's so heavily invested now in Ukraine that if he pulls back without at least walking away with Eastern Ukraine, he's going to look very weak and that will invite challenge to his authority at home, and ultimately his regime survival is the *raison d'être* for Putin's entire existence, so he can't walk away with nothing. So he'll go all the way up the escalation ladder if he can't at least get Eastern Ukraine.

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

Well, how boy, this leads to so many questions, but I guess one of them is what are the likelihood of regime change you've written? And I think I agree that the oligarchs in Russia are in it with him and they've been that in it with him from the very beginning. And while they're leaving the country, I guess, to go to wherever oligarchs go to get out of Russia.

Brandon Weichert ([12:40](#)):

You buy and the Seychelles mostly.

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

Okay. Right. Wherever it is, they're still pretty much with him and so he's not all that vulnerable. Now is it also true? Has he removed his family to a secret location and [crosstalk 00:12:56] in a deep bunker?

Brandon Weichert ([12:57](#)):

Yeah. My understanding is not only did he several weeks ago now remove his family to an undisclosed nuclear bunker. In fact, one of the reports I was reading is that his kids and at least one of the women in his life, because he's got multiple women, one of the women in his life are living in an Soviet era, underground nuclear city that has all the accoutrements of a modern city that was reserved for the Soviet elite. They're living there and they've been there for the last four weeks.

Bill Walton ([13:31](#)):

Don't [crosstalk 00:13:32] house, some five or 6,000 people maybe more?

Brandon Weichert ([13:34](#)):

Right. My understanding now there's reports coming out that Putin himself, one of the reasons he's been so militant is because he's physically disconnected from his advisors and generals, in one of these bunkers. And he's been living there since the start of the invasion, so he's literally been living underground. And now as you noted, the oligarchs have fled the country with their possessions, which tells me at least their thinking in Russia, along the elite, that this thing might go nuclear and they've taken action to preserve their physical wellbeing and their financial wellbeing to write out whatever nuclear health fire storm is initiated.

Brandon Weichert ([14:13](#)):

This is what I told the Pentagon last week when I was up in DC, our policy makers in Washington, I think are not understanding that A, just as they thought Putin's move in, building up against Ukraine was a bluff and that wasn't, Putin's threats that he'll go nuclear are not a bluff. This is not dealing with Khrushchev or even Brezhnev, who ultimately understood they needed to step down at the end, from the nuclear threat. This is a guy who has nothing left to lose, he's in his 70s, the average lifespan for Russian males is 66, so he's outlived most of his average Russian male citizens by about four years now. This is a guy who has banked his entire regime on the notion that he will make Russia great again. And that is by preserving the gains they've made over the last 30 years and also expanding Russia's geopolitical influence into the former Soviet Eastern European states, notably Ukraine.

Brandon Weichert ([15:10](#)):

So if he loses Ukraine, then he's de-legitimized himself. Putin thinks that he cannot have for that, so he will go all of the way. This is why he sent a hypersonic missile two weekends ago into Lviv, the supposedly safe part of Western Ukraine and he blew up NATO supply depot. This is he's threatening to escalate bombing in Western, excuse me, Eastern Poland, where those supply chains are coming out of carrying weapons. This is why he's threatening full on cyber warfare against the United States mainland and why we are not prepared for it and we should be, this is why he has consistently signaled in space that he will attack American satellite constellations to keep us back, to keep us from supplying Ukrainian resistance, and this is why he's willing to go nuclear, he will not brook a defeat in Ukraine.

Bill Walton ([16:03](#)):

But has Russia changed? I mean the Soviets always had a first strike doctrine, they were ready to use it. And there was the, the Soviets toasted 20, 25 million people in World War II, they used a big chunk of the population as cannon fodder, and they just overwhelm people with their victory came at enormous cost in human lives. But has Russian society changed any in the last 20 years where Putin doesn't have that ability to do that with that as there are not the oligarchs, but are there other parts of Russia that are saying, "Look, we're not going to be a nuclear cannon fodder this time around."

Brandon Weichert ([16:44](#)):

So my read on Russia is they don't have as many people as they used to, but there is this certain sort of apocalyptic mentality that has in with the Russians. Their fertility rates are chronically low, they're not having enough babies, their borders continue to contract over the last 30 years, which is one of the reasons why Putin is A, so popular with people, because he's trying to restore the old borders and B,

why people don't want to turn on him is because he's seen as strong and he's going to somehow reverse this decline. And so there's a certain sense of fatalism that's set in with the Russian people in general.

Brandon Weichert ([17:20](#)):

Now a lot of the Russian people don't like the war, the ordinary citizen, because it's their kids and their family who are in the meat grinder. But then again, I don't see them overthrowing him and I don't see the Russian elite really caring about the ordinary Russian opinion, they don't care, they don't live in a democracy like you or I do.

Brandon Weichert ([17:38](#)):

Ultimately, George W. Bush with Iraq had to contend with popular opinion and this was one of them. I mean, remember in 2006 there were things that George W. Bush wanted to do in Iraq that he ultimately was prevented from doing when the Democrats took over in 2006 Congress. And so he had to hold back, this is why he ultimately changed the strategy in Iraq that he had been holding fast to. In Russia, they don't really have that, they don't have the kind of political backlash that an American president would, that would force them to alter the strategy.

Bill Walton ([18:12](#)):

This is the Bill Walton Show. I'm here talking with the brilliant Brandon Weichert, geopolitical strategist, and author of *Winning Space* about where Russia is now in this conflict with Ukraine and what their vulnerabilities may be. At what point do we back Putin into the corner with conventional pushback from Ukraine where he feels like he's got to use a tactical nuke.

Brandon Weichert ([18:39](#)):

Well, and that's the thing. So you mentioned the preemptive warfare, a nuclear warfare doctrine. Now it's true on the strategic level sort of with ICBMs and sort of the nation killing nukes. It is true that Putin, I don't think wants to strike first with those. However, at the tactical level, the nonstrategic nuclear weapons, those sort of small nukes that the Soviets' design.

Bill Walton ([19:01](#)):

Well, the difference between tactical and strategic simply the range, is it [crosstalk 00:19:05] I mean, the lethality is roughly the same?

Brandon Weichert ([19:10](#)):

The yields are smaller on a tactical nuke.

Bill Walton ([19:11](#)):

Okay. All right. Well-

Brandon Weichert ([19:12](#)):

So basically the tactical nukes-

Bill Walton ([19:15](#)):

It's a small nuclear [crosstalk 00:19:17].

Brandon Weichert ([19:17](#)):

Right? Well, so you got to think about it the way the Russians do, right? So the Russians look at tactical nuclear weapons as just big artillery pieces. They don't understand the American sort of apocalyptic when it comes to any nuclear weapon. In fact, going back to the 1960s, the old Red Marshall V. D. Sokolovsky, he created the Soviet military doctrine that is explicitly called for Soviets using tactical nuclear weapons, preemptively against NATO lines. If the Russian command authority or the Soviet command authority ever decided to invade NATO, they would first strike NATO defenses with tactical nukes to soften up the resistance.

Brandon Weichert ([19:58](#)):

And so that old doctrine was with the Soviets until about 19... what was it? 1987, whenever Chernobyl happened in the '80s. And then Gorbachev changed that doctrine, but Vladimir Putin in the 2010s reinstated that doctrine at the tactical level and he has continued with that doctrine. And so my concern is, as you know, the Russians have not performed well at the conventional level, they have been slowed down, they were initially planning a desert storm, like modern, fast moving invasion that sort of cut through Ukrainian lines with conventional forces like butter, the way the Americans did to Iraq.

Brandon Weichert ([20:38](#)):

Ultimately, he wasn't able to achieve that. So pretty quickly the Russians shifted back to their old mentality of warfare with conventional forces, which was bloody, brutal, slogging, slow. And that's what you saw the uncoiling going on for the last several weeks, even now sort of like less of a lightning war, more of the anaconda, slowly on furling around their enemy. But even that is not performed as well as the Russians thought, so now they're shift thing and recalibrating to just focusing on Mariupol and the Eastern part of the country, however, it is my belief that Putin envisioned taking the whole country. And so if he can't find a way to save face where he can keep the Eastern portion and seriously weaken and debilitate Western portion, that he will start looking at that other strategy of nuclear escalation, that is where we are.

Bill Walton ([21:36](#)):

I quite agree. And shouldn't we provide some leadership here and step in and say, "Look, we're going to take NATO off the table. We understand your geostrategic concerns. Let's figure out a way to make a piece here that saves a little face on both sides, and move on with it and deescalate this." My concern is I don't see anybody in the Biden administration, it seems they all want to talk tough and these people I don't think-

Brandon Weichert ([22:02](#)):

Well, that's the thing.

Bill Walton ([22:03](#)):

... have any clue.

Brandon Weichert ([22:04](#)):

That's the thing, ironically, there are a bunch of red diaper babies who were very soft on the Soviet Union, particularly Biden in the '80s was a big supporter of the nuclear freeze movements against Reagan. And of course turns out a lot of those nuclear freeze movements are being funded by the KGB.

But here we have today, those same red diaper babies are actually very tough on Russia and this gets back to the fact that Vladimir Putin is not a communist and he is more of a sort of, I don't want to say right wing, but he is more on the right, in terms of Russian politics. And so the Democrats have this sort of allergy to that, but that doesn't mean that Putin's not a threat, he is a huge threat.

Bill Walton ([22:47](#)):

He's back in the regular autocrat [crosstalk 00:22:50].

Brandon Weichert ([22:49](#)):

That's right. He's a Tsarist, he's back in the Tsar [inaudible 00:22:51].

Bill Walton ([22:51](#)):

He's a Tsar. I mean the-

Brandon Weichert ([22:53](#)):

[crosstalk 00:22:53], but that doesn't mean they're a friend, right? So the Democrats though are overreacting, I think, because it should be Biden on the phone with Putin every day, trying to deescalate. And if anything, from what I can tell, he's not interested [inaudible 00:23:06], in fact, he flies to Warsaw this last week and he actually ends up at a time when it looked like Putin and Zelensky the leader of Ukraine were starting to deescalate. Then Biden comes in and makes three-

Bill Walton ([23:19](#)):

Ramps it up.

Brandon Weichert ([23:19](#)):

Right. He makes these three comments that are insane. He says, "First, Putin's a war criminal and that there's legal ramifications to that." Then he goes on and he goes the 82nd airborne in Poland. And he says, "When you're in Ukraine, you'll see what I'm talking about." What does that mean? Does that mean we're setting the 82nd airborne in the Ukraine. And then the third thing he says is that the, "Putin must go. Putin must go." Almost sounding like George H. W. Bush, about Saddam Hussein in '91. And then the fourth thing he says the next day after these controversial remarks are catching a lot of heat in the press is he says, "Look, if Putin attacks Ukraine with chemical weapons, I'll respond with chemical weapons." Well, what does that mean?

Brandon Weichert ([24:03](#)):

And he's not walking any of this back, in fact, he's coming out and contradicting or contradicting his ministers, his foreign policy experts who are then trying to say, "Well, the president didn't really mean that." Biden comes out and said, "That's exactly what I meant. In fact, I'm going to double down on that." He's escalating. And he should have been out there deescalating because what's being offered right now, what Zelensky and Putin are talking about is no different than what would've happened, had we not had the war, which is east of Ukraine goes to Russia and we deescalate and we talk about NATO not being or Ukraine not being a part of NATO. This is what we would've had six or eight weeks ago, had all been left alone. But unfortunately, now we have this bloodshed and it looks like Putin is willing to stand down, but then Biden's ratcheting up, why? Why?

Bill Walton ([24:50](#)):

Well, we're going to have to fathom Joe Biden's mind and I'm not sure, I don't think I'm qualified.

Brandon Weichert ([25:00](#)):

You need a medical opinion on that one. Right?

Bill Walton ([25:02](#)):

You need a medical opinion. But this is the most antinuclear administration in history and what we call them red diaper babies.

Brandon Weichert ([25:13](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([25:14](#)):

So on the one hand they've been working to dismantle, in fact, our nuclear arsenal, if they could. Well, at the same time inviting a cataclysm, the dichotomy here seems stunning.

Brandon Weichert ([25:29](#)):

Well, it is. And it's ideological and it shows you how blinkered they are. Remember a lot of these are Obama holdovers, a lot of these personnel choices. Remember under Obama, not only did we have the new start agreement with Russia that gave them a superiority in tactical nuclear weapons, but it also led to the sort of unilateral disarmament of our nuclear weapons arsenal in general, Obama was a big believer in that and Biden who during his Senate years in the '80s, as I mentioned, was a leader of the nuclear freeze movement against Reagan, that hasn't changed, he has whatever gray matter he has left intact, Biden is still very much anti-nuclear weapons. And we have an enemy in Russia and China who are ramping up their nuclear weapons arsenals at a time that we're letting ours wither on the vine and we don't have a strategic doctrine that really makes sense anymore at the nuclear level.

Bill Walton ([26:28](#)):

You're talking to Poland people in Poland, how are they feeling right now? What do they see?

Brandon Weichert ([26:34](#)):

They're very worried. They're worried about A, this administration and B, they're worried about Europe being left to the Germans and the French who are inimical to any kind of long term standing up against Russia. And so under the former Trump administration, it was the Three-Seas-Initiative which basically gave priority to the Baltic States, those former Soviet states in Eastern Europe with Poland as the nucleus of resistance. Under Biden, one of the first things he did was shift focus away from Poland and the Eastern Europeans, and return it back to that sort of 1980s, 1990s mentality of Germany and France lead the way. That's a very dangerous proposition because they don't view Russia necessarily as an enemy, they view it as a potential strategic partner and as a business partner.

Bill Walton ([27:19](#)):

Well, Angela Merkel certainly did not view Russia as an enemy in any percent.

Brandon Weichert ([27:22](#)):

No. She did not.

Bill Walton ([27:23](#)):

But we've got a new leader there. He was talking tough the first few weeks after this all broke. Where is he now? And where do you think [crosstalk 00:27:32]?

Brandon Weichert ([27:32](#)):

Well, ultimately the German elite are on the same page with each other, which is that they don't want to see the bad things into Ukraine, but at the same time, they don't want to risk the bottom line. And they Germany in particular is the economic beating heart of the European union, it is the de facto leader of the European union because the European union is primarily an economic alliance. Germany is the de facto leader of the European union now that Britain is out and so ultimately they need Russia to be on their side. So while they may ding Russia for these really egregious actions in the near term and this is the concern of Poland, in the long run, Germany cannot be relied on. And then you pair Germany with France, which while France, isn't the economic power in the continent it's certainly is the military power on the continent.

Brandon Weichert ([28:29](#)):

They also view they also view Russia as a potential balancer, not only against China, but more importantly, inexplicably against the Americans. And so we have to consider that Biden is seeding Europe to two powers that are ultimately going to resist and defy American and Eastern European wishes and needs to be strong against Russia in the long run.

Bill Walton ([28:56](#)):

A lot of questions, the economics sanctions seems to have done a lot of damage to the Russian economy, your take?

Brandon Weichert ([29:04](#)):

In the near term, unfortunately, all this has done has been to force Russia to start cultivating their own domestic capabilities. After the cold war, the Russian Federation became heavily reliant on American finance and Western capital. Now that they know how easy, literally almost with the flick of a switch, we can send Russia back 30 years economically. Now, Vladimir Putin is having to create alternative means to ensuring that Russia's economy remains free and strong. And so, while they've certainly been damaged bigly, as the former president would say, they have not been totally destroyed.

Brandon Weichert ([29:44](#)):

In fact, what they've done now is pivot harder to the East, and they're now becoming more reliant on China and of course, Beijing's very happy because they want that Russian military power on their side and they need Russia's natural resources. And so now you have this even deeper pairing of Russian and Chinese power, the autocratic Alliance of Eurasia, that's now forged in deep anti-Americanism forming, you now have also the complication of India. I also do a lot of work with the Indians, we need India against China, and yet India is fiercely independent, they've been dependent on Russian military equipment for decades, they don't want to abandon that Russian alliance for multiple reasons, least of all because they don't want to be too reliant on any one power in the West because of the colonial history in India.

Brandon Weichert ([30:33](#)):

So now you have Russia turning to India, India, reciprocating. And then you have also now this weird Alliance where India doesn't like China, China doesn't like India, and they're fighting each other in Northern India and yet over the issue of Russia, India and China are coordinating to help Russia evade Western sanctions in the long run. And so now you have this sort of Eastern or this sort of central Eurasian economic condominium forming, which over time will be a problem to America's ability to sanction.

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

It seems like the smart move would've been three, five years ago to start drawing Russia in with us as opposed to acting like they're the Soviet Union.

Brandon Weichert ([31:19](#)):

Right.

Bill Walton ([31:20](#)):

And my understanding is president wanted to do that.

Brandon Weichert ([31:24](#)):

Absolutely.

Bill Walton ([31:25](#)):

Couldn't do it because of the way the whole Russia collection collusion hoax came about, so he had his hand tied, couldn't do anything about it. And then we see Biden come in and talking like Elmer Fudd fighting. It's ridiculous to watch this man try to be a leader.

Brandon Weichert ([31:44](#)):

Right. Especially because when you look at what he did last year, Biden came in beating his chest at Russia and yet the first thing he did was remove the most onerous sanctions that Trump had put on. So talk about schizophrenia at the policy level at the same time he wants to cry havoc and let slip the dogs of Cold War 2.0, on Russia, he's giving Russia the economic lifeblood that they need by allowing for Nord Stream 2 to go on. By the way, Nord Stream 2, yes, the project was canceled, but the pipeline is physically complete, it's ready to go.

Bill Walton ([32:19](#)):

They need to turn it on.

Brandon Weichert ([32:20](#)):

They just need to turn it on. Second of all, E.ON one, I believe it's a German company that manages Nord Stream 1, has already said under no circumstances, will we cut off the Russian natural gas coming into Europe over NS1? And so this whole sort of, "We cut off Nord stream 2." Yeah. That hurts Russia. But now that China and India are filling in for the lost capabilities of Russia, selling natural gas to Europe, now it's going to India and China, it doesn't really matter, Russia's able to sell. And now Russia's demanding that they sell... that all purchasers of Russian natural gas do it on the ruble, it doesn't really matter anymore. In the long term, they're probably going to be able to prop up the Russian economy

this way. And so if anything, it gives greater independence in the long term to Moscow, and it actually weakens the ability of NATO and America to sort of hem in Russia economically.

Brandon Weichert ([33:17](#)):

So this has been a nightmare scenario. We've really created our own enemy. You're right. What President Trump was trying to do, this was Mike Flynn's strategy in 2017 and 2018, the big push was, how do we flip Russia? We may not be able to make them a perfect ally, but how do we make them enough of a friend where they will help us contain China and they will go after the Islamists in the middle east, in central Asia, in North Africa? Ultimately we've lost that, we've lost that.

Bill Walton ([33:46](#)):

Well. Yeah. And our response to get people to pour out Russian vodka and not go to Russian restaurant. I mean, to demonize Russian people in the way that the jingoists are doing is crazy.

Brandon Weichert ([34:01](#)):

It's insane and it's offensive as well because-

Bill Walton ([34:03](#)):

And one of the iron laws of economics, which is probably my long suit is the law of unintended consequences and we've got unintended consequence after consequence. And one of my concerns is the dollar's role as a world reserve currency. What we're beginning to in the oil markets is that China's now negotiating with Saudi Arabia to buy its oil and Japan, and what is it India is trying to buy their gas with Rupees?

Brandon Weichert ([34:31](#)):

Yep.

Bill Walton ([34:33](#)):

And everything else, currency blocks are beginning to line up, so we're really jeopardizing.

Brandon Weichert ([34:39](#)):

We are. So we are the masters of our self -destruction as a world power or the greatest power. You look at the last 30 years, the people who've been running foreign policy and economic policy in this country are the same people who got us into Iraq, they're the same people who sort of helped to create multiple bubbles. It used to be that a bubble was a once in a generation event, we've had like six or seven of them in my lifetime and they're getting worse and I think we're in another bubble now. And so you look at this people that we've had running the show, if you will, in national policy for the last 30 years, it's the same people who are getting us now into Russia, it's the same people who are getting us into these messes. How can we expect them to get us out of these messes when they've gotten us into these messes? They can't.

Brandon Weichert ([35:24](#)):

And so that's why everything's getting worse now in response to these crises and Donald Trump and the people he was bringing in, I knew a lot of them were sort of unorthodox, they weren't from that cloistered elite, they were from different places with different new ideas, and they were hated for it,

and they were pushed out, and they were investigated wrongly, and they were turned into these criminals when they weren't. And that was the opportunity to really change the dynamic and to preserve the power that we had inherited from the 1945 [inaudible 00:35:56] or that group and we've squandered it.

Brandon Weichert ([35:58](#)):

And I believe in the next decade, you're going to be looking at a new world order of a multipolar one and America has lived in that before, but we were never the dominant power in the multipolar orders of before it was Europe, before, Russia, and now we're going into a period of relative weakness, relative decline, and we're not managing it well because we have people who don't understand, we can't act the way we've been and expect some kind of different result. It's going to make things worse, not better.

Bill Walton ([36:28](#)):

This is Bill Walton Show. I'm here with Brandon Weichert and we're talking about kind of the strategic hold that the United States put itself into with not being able to think things through. And Brandon, I'm beginning to feel like we need to go on for four or five different shows to cover everything

Brandon Weichert ([36:50](#)):

I'm happy to.

Bill Walton ([36:52](#)):

Well, we will. But one of the things I wanted to do is just sort of take us to where we talked about tactical nuclear weapons, but there are a lot of other things that could be done, EMP, other sorts and you wrote your book on space warfare. What are the other options that the Soviet or the Russians have to do things that they haven't done?

Brandon Weichert ([37:18](#)):

So in my book I open and the book was finished in December of 2019, it was a totally different world when I submitted the manuscript. We're actually doing an update of it now for a paperback version. But at the time I was looking at-

Bill Walton ([37:32](#)):

Please do that because there's so much in there, but it would be great to see version two.

Brandon Weichert ([37:38](#)):

But the first chat chapter is 2022, the year Space Pearl Harbor happens. And if you remember in the book, it's Russia, not China, and at the time everybody was saying, Russia's not a threat. In fact, our friend Al Regnery was saying, "Are you sure you want to do the opening chapter about Russia not about China?" I said, "Yeah. I think we have to do it because I think Russia's going to go first. They're going to be the first ones to push us surround." It's sort of like, there's a long line in the queue now. And it'll be Russia, then Iran, then North Korea, and lastly, China, sort of a Marvel comic book movie where the bad guys are lining up in sort of staggered order, but Russia's going to go first because they're the ones who've been building out these space capabilities, real world space capabilities in the last decade.

Brandon Weichert ([38:25](#)):

Russia reorganized their military to fight and win a space war against the United States in 2010. Russia has been since 2012, 2013 deploying what they call is [foreign language 00:38:38] and these are small co-orbital satellites. My colleague, formerly of the RAND Corporation, Brian G. Chao coined the term space stalker. Basically these are small orbital satellites that tailgate our larger sensitive satellites in orbit and at the drop of a hat can latch onto our satellites with these grappling claws and physically either rip them apart or more likely push them out of orbit, our systems and rendering our forces that are reliant on those satellites, deaf, dumb and blind.

Brandon Weichert ([39:12](#)):

And so you win the space war, you damage America space capability, you deprive us of access to the strategic high ground of space in a crisis and you've basically ensured that America's interoperable integrated highly technological force is rendered deaf, dumb, and blind, we can't win or fight really a modern war then. And we don't have a large enough military to go back and fight a pre-1970s style of a Vietnam war type conflict. Well, the Russians and the Chinese, they can fight that because most of their forces are still at that 1970s era of warfare. And so if you remove that highly integrated technological style of military that we've built up since the Cold War, we can't win, we can't fight as well, and so the Russians have been seeding the orbits. Yes.

Bill Walton ([40:04](#)):

So they don't have the capability to win, but they have the ability to decapitate our ability to do anything and bring us to a-

Brandon Weichert ([40:13](#)):

Yeah. If they decapitate that ability, then they can win they believe at the conventional level because then they bring us down to their level and of course they're more able to fight at that level because that's where they've been at. And we saw this when the Russians invaded Georgia, for instance, I had a colleague at the DIA who was in Georgia when the invasion happened, and he said that the Russian troops, a lot of them were wearing Nikey sneakers when they came and they would go into the Georgian military bases, and they knew that the Americans had given the Georgian military, our boots to use. And so they would go in and they would raid the Georgian military bases for the Good American boots, don those boots and then keep going.

Brandon Weichert ([40:54](#)):

In World War II, the famous Battle of Stalingrad, they didn't have the Soviet, and the red army was so badly equipped, they only had one gun per two troops. So they would basically... and this was detailed in the movie, Enemy at the Gates that opening scene, they'd give one soldier an empty gun and they'd pair him with a soldier who had ammunition. And the logic was, one of those two guys would get killed and then the other one would pick up the equipment they needed and go on to fight on. So this is a pretty traditional Russian way of warfare, it's sort of the good enough Russian way of war.

Bill Walton ([41:28](#)):

The 50% casualty rate.

Brandon Weichert ([41:30](#)):

Yeah. And they don't care because it's the Russians, it's good enough, hey, who cares? You know, so that's sort of where we're at. So the Russians figure, if you can deprive the Americans of their

technological accoutrements, the Americans can't handle a lot of casualties and furthermore, the US military is an expeditionary force by nature, it is also accounting for less than 1% of our population. And so once you remove the all volunteer force, can the Americans feel a conscripted force, will they tolerate that, or will there be political backlash at home that will force Washington to negotiate in the long term for a negotiated settlement with Russia over whatever we're quarreling over? And that's all from removing those satellite linkages in orbit.

Bill Walton ([42:18](#)):

Let me back up just a little bit into the cultural issues, because you're talking about two adversaries that are eager to win. I read something recently where, when Americans were asked, whether they're willing to defend the country, our country, 60% of Democrats said, "No." And I had somebody listening to one of my earlier shows about these issues and they said, "Well, this show is political, I thought it'd be about nuclear strategy." Well, you can't do nuclear strategy without thinking about the domestic politics and what people believe and I think we're stuck with a lot of people that are not thinking clearly about preserving our country.

Brandon Weichert ([43:00](#)):

Right. Well, and furthermore, so a colleague of mine who teaches at the Naval War College told me, "You know Brandon, your book would've been a national bestseller, you would've been all over the lecture circuit, you would've been so famous had you not positively mentioned Donald Trump in your book."

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

I think there's some... that's sort of what I'm saying.

Brandon Weichert ([43:23](#)):

I think that way too, but I told him, I said, "I don't know how I could have talked about national space policy without speaking favorably about Trump, because..." and I tell this to my Democrat and I have more of friends are liberals and I'm a millennial, so most of my friends are liberals. I tell my liberal friends is, "Forget about Donald."

Bill Walton ([43:40](#)):

Well, I'm up in the DC Area and that's what we have here.

Brandon Weichert ([43:43](#)):

That's right. That's one of the reasons why we moved out of DC. But I tell my liberal friends and family this, I say, "Look, forget about the mean tweets, forget about Donald Trump. The fact of the matter is, that man actually created Space Force." And for 30 years, Never Trump right, the Bill Crystals and the more kind of conservative Democrats, if there are any left used to always go on about how A, we need a Space Force and B, we need to take NASA more seriously because that is something that would benefit us all. Well for 30 years, nobody really took those two things seriously from either party until Trump, Trump did that. And if there's one area, we should have national consensus on it's that we want to be the greatest country in space, because that's where we get science, that's how we do a lot of science experiments, that's how we do a lot of economic aspects of our lives goes through space.

Brandon Weichert ([44:44](#)):

And yeah, it's the strategic high ground, so why not have us dominate it because Russia and China is especially the two of them to talk openly about how they're going to dominate space for their country. And I think part of this gets back to that poll you mentioned where we don't view the national interest anymore, we don't care. And there's a poll that I talk about in my book, in which I looked at, there was a... I think it was a pew research poll. I don't remember who did, it was either pew or it was one of them, one of the big ones. And they asked UK, US, and Chinese teenagers back in 2018, they said, "What do you want to be with when you grow up?"

Brandon Weichert ([45:21](#)):

And they literally had a set of options and the British and American teenagers overwhelmingly said they wanted to be vloggers or social media influencers when they grew up and I think it was 80%, and the exact same percent, 80% of Chinese teenagers said they wanted to be astronauts. Now that's scary because it shows you that in China, the young people have a real scientific objective for being successful not only for themselves because of course, STEM education is where all the money's at, but it's also has real implications at the national security level.

Bill Walton ([45:59](#)):

Well, it's under reported, but G and I think before him, I mean, they've been pushing national greatness for decades and infuses their curriculum and they talk about the century of humiliation. And after the opian wars, the Chinese until Mao came, were marginalized and they want to put their way, put theirself back. Kids believe that, buy that. And they-

Brandon Weichert ([46:24](#)):

Even if they don't necessarily like Xi Jinping, the young people of China are not going to turn on China anymore because you look at last 20... I mean, if you look at Shang- if you've been to Shanghai, if you were there in 2008 and you visited there in 2018, totally different city, totally different universe. Shenzhen which used to be sort of this messy, nasty, totally different city than it was 10 years ago. And so if you're a young and in China, you're no longer necessarily looking to the West for being the center of advancement in progress, you're looking in your own backyard. And in fact, you're looking down on the West because we look like a hot mess to them. And so that's very dangerous because the Chinese, particularly the young people are very smart, and very competent, and very capable.

Brandon Weichert ([47:15](#)):

And so that capability and competence is no longer necessarily going to the West, it's staying in China. Or if it does go to the West, it gets what it needs from the West and it goes back home. And now, China's becoming so attractive. And I talk about this, I have a third book that I've been working on biotech in China. My wife is a geneticist. She went to Yale for a PhD in genetics. And when she was at Yales, when we were dating, she would show me these emails, she'd get from Chinese genetics labs in Shanghai, Wuhan and Shenzhen saying, "Hey, come to Wuhan, open up a genetics lab. We know you're a Yaley, we want Yaleys, come here, this is where all the high tech advancements are going to be done in the future. We're building candy land."

Brandon Weichert ([48:05](#)):

It's the field of dreams mentality, if you build it, they will come. "We're building the next generation of infrastructure for high tech, R&D, you as an American with your Yaley background, you forget about working in the West, because that's old news. You come to the new China and you'll be treated like a

queen. We'll pay off your student debt and you do the research here, start the next genetics lab here." And while my wife didn't do that, obviously, because she was married to me, a lot of her colleagues did, and it wasn't just the Chinese students, they were targeting anymore. It used to be China would target only students of Chinese descent. It's now white girls from Virginia that they're targeting. It's now, you know the young Indian [crosstalk 00:48:51].

Bill Walton ([48:50](#)):

White girls from Yale, white girls from Virginia, from Yale. They want the cognitive elite, they want-

Brandon Weichert ([48:56](#)):

Right. That's right. And so, and they don't care anymore because they think that's how they're going to get the jump on the Americans and in a way they're right, because a lot of my wife's friends, they're in China now.

Bill Walton ([49:11](#)):

Well, it's easy to forget that just five years ago we thought we were going to bring China into the world economy and make them just like us and we're all going to live together in the... What is Tom Friedman's book? The World Is Flat. That didn't happen.

Brandon Weichert ([49:27](#)):

No. In fact, Eamonn Fingleton who was George H. W. Bush's special trade representative to China, who became a real hardcore libertarian Rand Paul type in the two thousands. He wrote a book in 2008 called In the Jaws of the Dragon. And he called that neoliberal theory of send, of our corporations, being the Vanguard of we were going to turn China capitalist first and in turn that would ultimately make China democratic and not make them into an enemy that we would have to fight. He called that theory convergence theory.

Brandon Weichert ([50:01](#)):

Well, he said actually what happened was reverse convergence wherein our companies were the first Western groups to go over to China and the Chinese Communist Party, which remembered to China was a lot like Kim's North Korea on a larger scale, in the 1970s, it was an Agrarian backwater cult of personality state. And when Mao died, Xi Jinping took over and he was like, "Hey, I want to do business with the West, but I don't want to give up my political power."

Brandon Weichert ([50:28](#)):

So when our corporations went over there, the Chinese Communist Party was very good at collecting them and saying, "If you want to do business in China, that's fine, but you're not going to bring your liberal democracy with you. You're going to bring your free trade, your free market capitalism, but we're going to keep our politics the same. And in fact, now that you're invested here and you're making BKU bucks, if you want to keep making BKU bucks off us, you're going to turn around and you're going to use your money in Washington to get the Washington policy makers, to be more amenable to us on the policy level." And that is exactly what happened. It's reverse convergence. They're making us more like them, more amenable to the CCP rather than the other way around.

Bill Walton ([51:11](#)):

Well, Brandon, we have just touched the surface of we've got 14 or 15 topics we didn't get to Biolabs in Ukraine, we're already onto biotech and in China. Let's let's come back and get together.

Brandon Weichert ([51:26](#)):

Yes. I'd love to.

Bill Walton ([51:26](#)):

I want get into the space piece and I want to get into where China is and where we ought to be and how America can regain our mojo to push back against this.

Brandon Weichert ([51:40](#)):

Absolutely.

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

So anyway, Brandon Weichert, your website is, where can we find you? You're the Weichert Report?

Brandon Weichert ([51:48](#)):

The Weichert Report, that's W-E-I-C-H-E-R-Treport.com. And then I'm also contributor to The Age of Times, and a contributing editor at American Greatness, as well as The Washington Times.

Bill Walton ([51:58](#)):

And your Twitter handle is

Brandon Weichert ([52:01](#)):

@wethebrandon.

Bill Walton ([52:03](#)):

Wethebrandon, I like that. Okay.

Brandon Weichert ([52:04](#)):

Yeah. Let's go Brandon.

Bill Walton ([52:06](#)):

Yeah, let's go. This has been the Bill Walton Show, been here with Brandon Weichert and talking about all things, Russia, China, Ukraine, and America's future as a superpower, join us next time. You can find us as you know in all the major platforms, Rumble, YouTube, Spotify, Apple, also we're streaming on CPAC now and Monday nights at seven o'clock and also we're on the, For America platform where you can catch us there. Anyway, so Brandon, thank you and we'll be back.

Brandon Weichert ([52:40](#)):

Thank you.

Bill Walton ([52:40](#)):

We'll be back with more because there's a lot to talk about. And also I want to do some, some history too. I mean, I'm reading Paul Fussell's, *The Great War and Modern Memory*.

Brandon Weichert ([52:54](#)):

How is that?

Bill Walton ([52:55](#)):

It's great.

Brandon Weichert ([52:56](#)):

Okay. Because I'm-

Bill Walton ([52:57](#)):

It's about all the poets that got formed in World War I and how it changed our... we became cynical after world, we went in with this Ardian optimism about progress and came [crosstalk 00:53:13].

Brandon Weichert ([53:13](#)):

Yeah. I know about the book. I've been meaning... because basically my big project right now that I've been working on since 2018 is a world war book that sort of compares what was going on in the run up to World War I with what's going on today and how we might be headed toward a [crosstalk 00:53:29].

Bill Walton ([53:29](#)):

I think we have to do that because we've been living in since the fall of the Soviet Union and this kind of era of-

Brandon Weichert ([53:37](#)):

Happy thing, happy [crosstalk 00:53:38] .

Bill Walton ([53:38](#)):

Happy things. And now it's decided going on, I don't think people understand how much things can be completely different.

Brandon Weichert ([53:44](#)):

And like I said, at the beginning of the interview, it's not going back. There's no putting Humpty Dumpty back together again.

Bill Walton ([53:51](#)):

I hope you enjoyed the conversation. Want more? Click the subscribe button or head over to the [billwaltonshow.com](http://billwaltonshow.com), to choose from over a hundred episodes. You can also learn more about our guest 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.