Bill Walton (00:00)

I'm winging this one today, I don't have anything written out.

Brandon J. Weichert (00:00)

Okay. Sure. Thanks for watching.

Bill Walton (00:09)

Well, events, as they say, seem to be piling up on the world stage. We've had Ukraine, Russia, now we're looking at Hamas, Israel, Taiwan is looking very tasty to China who's had eyes on it for decades. We're also seeing increasingly the impact of Iran on the world stage. We've thought about China, obviously, and Russia.

disappear from the headlines somewhat, well, they're back. Because it's pretty clear that Iran is the state sponsor of most of the terrorism in the Middle East, and perhaps behind Iran stands China. You know, for this guy who spent his year in private equity doing investments where the world was much more certain, we were risking dollars, but we weren't risking lives.

And with the Biden administration seemingly making one feckless bad move after another, I'm getting very concerned about where this is going. So I've asked my friend, Brandon Weickert, who we all know, one of the really interesting, most interesting geopolitical strategists around. Brandon is working on a book, I'm not sure when it's published, we'll find out in a second, about Iran. And you may recollect, we talk with them.

couple of months ago about China and China's building bio weapons. So and then I think as I recollect, Brandon, you've also written an interesting book on space warfare and also seems to be coming into play. The world's become a very dangerous place. Am I right or wrong?

Brandon J. Weichert (01:53)

Unfortunately, you're right. Thanks for. Happy New Year. Yes. I don't mean to. I don't mean to bring sadness to the audience, but I think that your breakdown of the situation is completely correct. Is it's grim and yeah.

Bill Walton (01:55)

Your turn. Great to see you back. After that riff, I don't know.

Oh

Let me just do one, let me do a camera check. Maureen, you wanna come around here and take a look what we've got here? We've got a little, Brandon's usually so clear. I don't want to, is that on our end or his end? No, that's on his end. Can you fuss with your camera somewhat to get us tuned in here?

Brandon J. Weichert (02:42)

I don't think it's the camera. I think it might be the actual internet

Bill Walton (02:48)

Yeah. Well, you know, Riverside does process differently. So it's recorded locally. So whatever he's seeing locally. Well, let me ask you this question. How do you look to yourself?

Brandon J. Weichert (02:48)

Um,

Yeah, there's not much I can do.

I look fine. You're grainy. Yeah, I look fine.

Bill Walton (03:06)

Do you look gorgeous? Okay, so this is riverside. Okay, so I like the...

Brandon J. Weichert (03:12)

Okay, does that mean that it'll

Bill Walton (03:17)

Brandon is it records locally on

as you, as it goes. So it's not, as long as you're looking good, and even if your internet connection is bad, it, according to what I've heard, it should actually work okay. So don't, well, keep going. If you look great to you, I look great to me, and then what happens is Riverside uploads these images and we'll assemble them later. So let's go ahead. I like my...

Brandon J. Weichert (03:22)

Okay.

I look great. Yeah. OK. Yeah. Because I use I use Riverside when I do the epic time. So.

Bill Walton (03:54)

Oh, good. You know, I just, we had Jan, how's he spell his last name? Jelanick, Jelkanick, Jekyllic. Yeah. We was over for dinner on New Year's Eve. That was a really interesting dinner. So.

Brandon J. Weichert (03:59)

Oh, yeah, yeah.

He's great. Him and his wife are great. Yeah.

Bill Walton (04:20)

Okay.

So Brandon Weickert, what are we to make of events?

Brandon J. Weichert (04:29)

Well, you're you are correct that it is grim and getting grimmer. I keep telling people in the private sector for the last six months who are interested in political risk, I or geopolitical risk. I keep telling them that this election is going to be the last chance really to stop the bleeding, as it were. I know everybody says that every election cycle and certainly in my life, everybody says that every four years. But twenty four.

is really going to be the year that determines whether the United States remains as the global superpower or whether it becomes truly a declining power among many other great rising powers like China in particular. And so if we reelect Biden, the situation will worsen. It will likely deteriorate to the point that you have major conflicts erupting everywhere. Supply chains will be disrupted.

kind of commodity, especially oil, will skyrocket. And life for the ordinary American, the middle-class American who's already under so much, you know, threat economically will only get worse. And so that's the stake. If you want to avoid World War III, it really comes down to leadership. And it looks like Donald Trump's going to be the nominee. If he is, he will have my complete support because I believe he will be the one.

to stop us from going into this nightmare scenario that you and I are talking about.

Bill Walton (06:01)

Well, I was on, I was on CPAC now with Matt and Mercy Schlapp day before yesterday. And I boldly predicted that Republicans will win and Trump will be our next president. And then I left it at that. I didn't do my usual head.

Brandon J. Weichert (06:14)

It's looking it's look it's looking it's. Well it's certainly looking like he's going to be the nominee. Whether he can win or not the general election it's really going to be contingent. You know what's going on in August to October.

Bill Walton (06:27)

We all worry about the election integrity. But let's bring it back to our area of concern right now, which for me, let's start the story in the Red Sea. We've got now what the Hamas atrocities in Israel and then Israel's response been ongoing now for what, about two and a half months, almost three months. And...

Brandon J. Weichert (06:55)

Yep.

Bill Walton (06:57)

that's proceeding at pace, but in the meantime, the Houthis in Yemen have been lobbying every sort of drone and missile at shipping in the Red Sea. And of course, we know they're backed by Iran, and we haven't really responded. We've just let that happen. And as a consequence, I think eight out of the 10 major shipping companies are no longer using the Suez Canal Red Sea to transport.

and the ships are being routed from the Indian Ocean down around Africa and then back up to the Mediterranean, towards Europe, which is massively more expensive than the canal. So already right there we're beginning to see an economic disruption.

Brandon J. Weichert (07:44)

Yep. Which is the point. So in my book, The Shadow War, Iran's Quest for Supremacy, I get into I predicted, by the way, this war. I finished writing the book in May of 2021. It was published this last summer. So I predicted everything that's happening now. And part of understanding the Iran threat, you have to understand how they use terrorism and terrorist organizations as proxies for power projection purposes.

Obviously in a straight up fight between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran, the United States military overcomes every time. But when Iran starts introducing these unconventional warfare methods, it becomes much more difficult for the United States to respond. And we're seeing this now play out with the Houthis because for the Biden administration to respond to either provocations from the Houthis or provocations possibly from Hezbollah,

or Hamas, that means they would have to use military force, which would mean they would be angering the true backers of these organizations, the Islamic Republic of Iran, a country, of course, that Biden, like his former boss, Obama, very badly wants to have an appeasement, accommodation, make a deal with Iran. And so all of these

factors are playing into why the Biden administration is apparently getting pushed around by a band of miscreants who live in caves like the Houthis in Yemen and why they won't deploy U.S. naval power.

Bill Walton (09:19)

So we have actual caves in Yemen that's their hideout.

Brandon J. Weichert (09:25)

Yeah, they live, they live in the desert and I was sort of extrapolating from that. The point is that this is not a major threat.

Bill Walton (09:31)

Well, you know, the one, somebody, somebody joke, let me, the joke is that if there's a terrorist organization that starts with the letter H, there's a good chance that Iran's backing it. I mean, we got the Houthis, we have Hamas, they're also backing Hezbollah. And you know, how to, so, but they're, they're the, they're the state sponsor of all this. And I've heard that.

Brandon J. Weichert (09:45)

That's right.

Hasb- Hasb was the big one. Yeah.

Yes.

Bill Walton (10:00)

The Biden administration, of course, is filled, and the State Department in particular, is filled with Iran lovers. You know, we had the spectacle of Rob Malley, whose father is a

Brandon J. Weichert (10:09)

Well, let's not forget the White House National Security Council. Right, right. Yeah.

Bill Walton (10:16)

Well, tell me about the Security Council. We can also want to do Rob Malik.

Brandon J. Weichert (10:17)

That's exactly that. Well, that's it. You mentioned you mentioned you mentioned Bob Mallee. I mean, he's he was a part of the NSC. And this is this. This is the primary national security policy group for the White House. And the you're not just Iran lovers, or its actual people on the payroll of Islamic Republic of Iran.

intelligence. And so you now have this situation arising where you have fellow travelers in the State Department and then at the Pentagon and at the NSC, you've got actual agents, paid agents of Iran.

Bill Walton (10:50)

So the great...

So they've graduated from lover to prostitute. They don't perform their services. They're not free. You're going to have to pay me.

Brandon J. Weichert (10:57)

Right!

That's right. That's right. That's right. And so and that's who's that's who's formulating our Iran policy. And so it shouldn't surprise any Americans scratching their head going, how are we letting the Houthis walk all over us? Or how are we letting Iran get away with all of that they're getting away with? Well, it's because we have a president and an administration right now that not only is sympathetic to Iran, but actually has been penetrated.

by Iranian intelligence. Your audience should be aware of one thing in particular that's been glossed over. And I think it's been glossed over because there's actual investigation going into it. But in 2021, the New York Post reported that the first family's secret service detail, one of the head agents for the Bidens, a secret service agent, was actually on the payroll of Iranian intelligence. In fact, there was a group of secret service agents who were in charge of the Bidens protection detail who were actually arrested

because they were known to be accepting money and other gifts from Iranian intelligence and feeding Iranian intelligence the personal whereabouts and safety and safety hygiene of the Biden family. This was in the run-up to the Vienna talks in 2021 between the US, its allies in Iran over their nuclear program. And it is believed that these secret service agents who are aware of...

personal intelligence and, you know, conversations between the president and his intel chiefs were relaying what was being said about Iranian capabilities to the Iranians, trying to find out what we know about them. And so this goes back years and nobody's talking about it. The Biden administration has been thoroughly compromised, not just by China, but by Iran as well. And this is why we're letting the Iranians run roughshod over us and our allies in the region.

Bill Walton (12:51)

Well, there's another reason we're letting them run roughshod, is this is an election year. And I think the fear is that if we got into a tangle with Iran, and Iran was no longer pumping its oil, we'd see gasoline prices skyrocket. And it's interesting for the administration that has done everything to kill fossil fuels and oil and gas, and in effect drive gas prices up. They certainly don't want that during an election.

Brandon J. Weichert (13:20)

No.

Bill Walton (13:21)

and seeing something lit off. So the politics of this are interesting. Of course, if we don't do something about Iran and Israel decides to, there's a point at which, I'm sorry, Israel might start lobbing missiles at Iran, and then we've got a full-scale conflagration in that area. Is that scenario?

Brandon J. Weichert (13:43)

Yeah. Well, it's already starting to happen. You're absolutely...

No, you're right. That's exactly where this is headed. And so the Israelis, so basically what happened was the reason October 7th even happened was because after the Trump administration left office, they left the conditions for a stable pro-American peace in the region between Israel and the Saudis to create an anti-Iran coalition with the Americans kind of staying in the background, kind of helping both parties contain Iran. Biden takes power.

He does pay lip service to the Abraham Accords, but behind the scenes, his team is dismantling those accords. The Israelis and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman tried to continue with that alliance even after the Americans under Biden were stepping back. Netanyahu travels to the UN. Yes, yes, Saudi Arabia. Yes, yes. And so.

Bill Walton (14:37)

Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. This is Saudi Arabia? Okay. Yeah, we got to... Although we don't know the names in countries as well as you do, so we've got to nail it down. So this is Saudi Arabia. They've been trying to preserve... Okay, maybe you did.

Brandon J. Weichert (14:50)

Yes, forgive. I thought I said that. I'm sorry. Yes. Yeah. So, so the Saudis and the Israelis have been trying to get together, tried to have been trying to get together. And basically, October 7th rolls around the reason the Iranians ordered Hamas to do the attack when they did. That was three weeks after Netanyahu went to the UN and announced Israel and Saudi Arabia were working together.

And what happened after October 7th, Israel has to respond militarily against the Palestinian Arabs in Gaza. And that immediately puts the government of Saudi Arabia on the back foot because their people are sympathetic to the Palestinian Arabs. So the Saudi government can't be as publicly close to Israel as they want to be, which empowers Iran. This was always the strategy. So you're watching right now Israel's...

basically becoming isolated. The Americans are trying to restrain them. Biden doesn't want them to do more because of what you said, worried about the price of oil, worried about instability. The Saudis are trying to walk a tightrope. And what this is going to do is it might actually force Israel to get desperate and actually start doing what you're talking about, launching attacks across the region, which would then precipitate the very war we're supposedly trying to avoid.

Bill Walton (16:07)

And Biden's worried about Michigan, which has one of the largest Arab populations in the United States. And he wants, you know, so the whole, the whole political calculus is entering in here and not, not anything about the long-term strategic interests of the United States.

Brandon J. Weichert (16:23)

Right. And we are going to, what's going to happen, I think, is the closer we get to the election, and by the way, the Iranians know that if Trump is reelected, their whole little plan for pushing the Americans out of the region by attacking our allies like Israel and Saudi Arabia, that whole plan dies.

So I actually think the fact that Biden might not win the election in 2024 is prompting Iran to get more aggressive, to kind of use it before they lose it, if you will, because if Trump gets reelected, they're going to have to stand down because Trump's going to go crazy on them. And they know that. And so that's why I think you're actually going to see greater geopolitical risk over the next eight to 12 months, not less. People think that Biden, by restraining Israel and all this, is actually bringing peace. He's not.

Bill Walton (17:08)

2024, yeah.

Brandon J. Weichert (17:10)

This is the fulcrum point year. This is, this is the point in which the future of America's superpower status will be determined.

Bill Walton (17:21)

So let's now throw Ukraine into the mix. As you and I talked about, we didn't think Ukraine could win this war from the get-go. And it now looks like if they haven't lost the war, that certainly they're not going to win. And the United States, the big constituents, or big parts of the Congress now don't want to put any more money into the Ukraine initiative, further sealing their fate. How does that play out?

Brandon J. Weichert (17:52)

Yeah. So, and actually what you're seeing in Iran and the Middle East is linked to what's going on between Russia and Ukraine because the Iranians are allied with Russia as well as China. Yeah. And so now you see this sort of becoming a global battlefield. The thing with Ukraine is that without the support of the United States, they cannot possibly continue the war. Even with the support of the United States, though, they couldn't win the war.

Bill Walton (18:01)

Yeah, that's why I bring it.

Brandon J. Weichert (18:21)

because they don't have enough troops. The territory that they have to retake is too large. And the Russians are too well entrenched in the Eastern part of Ukraine and in Crimea. And the war in Ukraine, and you and I might've spoken about this before, but the war in Ukraine is all about Sevastopol, which is the naval port in Crimea. That is what this has always been about. After the Cold War, people like Victoria Nuland and other neoconservatives got it in their head.

that we could push Russia out of its historical foothold in Sevastopol and therefore deny them access to the Black Sea by making Ukraine a NATO and EU member. And Putin knows this. This is, by the way, the basis of my next book, which is right now entitled A Disaster of Our Own Making. Putin is aware that he's got four major warm water ports, one in Tartus, Syria, one in Sevastopol,

Vladivostok and one on the Baltic Sea in the Kaliningrad. He needs warm water ports to be a truly powerful nation with international trade linkages. He cannot afford to lose Sevastopol. And so he's gonna fight to the death for that.

Bill Walton (19:33)

Well, here.

Well, Sevastopol is Crimea, which is, for those of us that don't have a map in front of them, it all open, this all sits above the Black Sea and the warm water ports you're talking about are in the Black Sea and Ukraine and Russia really traditionally sort of shared that access depending on who was in charge. And so that's why this is so strategically important. A war of our own making, the title suggests what you believe. I believe that we've provoked.

Russia in this and made a lot of strategic blunders and made this war inevitable. Now we're paying the price for that. Agree?

Brandon J. Weichert (20:17)

think you're right. Yeah, I think you're right. I mean, Russia is not innocent in this either. But I do think that we basically after the Cold War, there was a very small window of opportunity where we could have really flipped Russia into being a part of the West and our elite, the very same elite who fought Reagan when Reagan said, I'm going to defeat the Soviets. Reagan defeats the Soviets. A new Russia is born. And that's when the American elite decide we're going to fight the Russians.

It's insane. They're not communists anymore. We could have actually used them to contain China and go deeper into Eurasia. But because of the way the neoconservative and neoliberal elite in D.C. work, that's when they went to basically to war with Russia. And now here we are 30 years later, a disaster of our own making. All of this was avoidable. Russia cannot abandon eastern Ukraine or Crimea because that is a borderland for their territory any more than we would let Mexico.

become part of Russia today. It just wouldn't happen. We would go to war for that. And it's the same way that Moscow views this. In fact, they've even said the same thing, is that if we went into Mexico, America, you would go to war with Mexico. It's the same exact mentality.

Bill Walton (21:32)

So where does it go from here? Do you, it seems to me like Zelensky's now saying, Zelensky's been an interesting figure. He wanted to negotiate, I think, at the outset and then dug in and dug in and dug in. Now he refuses to negotiate. And now I think Victoria Newland, who's really the architect of this whole debacle, is saying, well, maybe we ought to start negotiating. Zelensky doesn't want to, so it looks like Zelensky's gotta go.

And of course, Victoria Nuland's already engineered one regime change in 2014. Looks like she could be about to engineer another.

Brandon J. Weichert (22:05)

Yeah.

There is a lot of movement right now behind the scenes in Kiev. You've got people like Kuleba, the foreign minister or the defense minister. You've got people like I'm forgetting his name, the big general over there. Starts with a Z. Zhezhlyuzhny. You've got people like General Zhezhlyuzhny, who's very respected, who's been leading the Ukrainian war effort, who's been telling Zelensky, we can't take.

Eastern Ukraine and Crimea. It's not possible. It's not militarily feasible. And Zelensky is saying, no, go, go. And so you're right. The makings for some kind of coup are there because Zelensky is already cracking down on these people in his cabinet who are starting to question his war strategy. In about a year and a half ago, after Kiev was successfully defended from the Russian invasion, that was the moment. You and I spoke about this before.

That was the moment when Ukraine had maximum leverage over Russia and Russia was willing to make a deal. They went through the Israelis, Naftali Bennett, who was the prime minister of Israel before Netanyahu. And Naftali Bennett is the one who said, Boris Johnson in England and President Biden basically threatened Zelensky, you are not.

to even think about negotiating. And that is what sets Zelensky on the path of becoming this hardliner. I also think Zelensky's worried about his future if he makes a deal. He'll look very weak in the eyes of his own people. He might even get overthrown. And he's also worried about his bottom line. He's got many millions of dollars he's made off of all the years of assistance that we've given to Ukraine. Now, just for your audience's sake, I'd like to add one quick thing. I have a very different take, I think, than most on Zelensky.

I actually think Zelensky is a tragic figure. I think that he's got a terrible position he's in. I empathize and sympathize with the fact that he is trying to save his country. I think that's a legitimate thing he's trying to do. It's an impossible position, but I do think there's a lot of corruption there. I think that the corruption is actually feeding the war effort. In my new book, I talk about how...

all of this decades of corruption with Western aid is actually causing the war to go on longer, killing many millions more of Ukrainians than it would, because any rational person would have said when Kiev was defended, the capital, that's when you make a deal. You don't make a deal, Bill, you know this, when you have no leverage. That's a terrible position to be in. They've lost their leverage now in Ukraine. Russia doesn't have to deal with them. They don't have to.

Bill Walton (24:45)

Thanks for watching.

Yeah, you're not going to, you can try to make the deal, but you're not going to like it. Well, you know, for those of us here in the United States who've wanted to portray this as a morality tale with, you know, plucky Ukrainians and evil Russians, I, you know, that's a, that's a narrative which never was true. Ukraine's a complex country. It has a history of corruption. It was never all that virtuous. Russia was never all that evil.

Brandon J. Weichert (24:53)

Right!

Bill Walton (25:17)

I think they have interest, as you point out, to protect their access to warm water ports and bringing NATO into the doorstep of Russia by making Ukraine a member, was never going to happen. So this is about interests, and it seems like we've played the cards completely wrong. And it's, you know...

Brandon J. Weichert (25:33)

Yeah.

We've created the problem. It didn't, this problem didn't need to exist. It didn't need to exist. Yeah.

Bill Walton (25:46)

Well, so I want to weave the third player in the stage here, because your initial point about the United States losing its hegemony, I think that's already happened. I think we're already at a point where strategically we don't control events anymore. And we've got Russia we've talked about, Iran is now looming, and China, of course, is the big one, the 900-pound potential existing enemy out there.

What role do you see China playing in instigating what happened in Ukraine and also instigating what happened in on Gaza Strip and setting this whole counter peg off? Counter peg? Let me try that again. Powder keg. Yeah, fast three times. Powder keg.

Brandon J. Weichert (26:27)

Yeah. Well, powder keg. Yeah. Well, you're yeah, you're right. Again, I would also like to just say you said something that reminds me of an old Abraham Lincoln quote. He apparently said at some point during the Civil War, he said that I do not claim to have controlled events.

Bill Walton (26:42)

Ha ha ha.

Brandon J. Weichert (26:55)

but confess plainly that events have controlled me. And what he was saying at that time was he viewed himself as a failure because he didn't prevent the Civil War, the bloodiest war that we ever fought, the war between fellow Americans. And I'm worried that something similar is happening today on the global stage. America's no longer controlling events. Events are controlling us. And that's when wars, really bad wars, start that get a lot of Americans killed and make a lot of Americans poor. And so,

That's my fear here. You're absolutely right. And as for China, the hidden hand of the Red Communist Party could be felt at every point in all of these conflicts and crises. In Game of Thrones, the famous series on HBO based on the George R.R. Martin books, there's a character who's an upstart and he's trying to overthrow the system and bake himself the leader. And he tells another character for him, chaos is a ladder. It is a you create enough chaos to climb your way from the bottom.

As everybody's fighting, you climb over them. And now suddenly they've all fought each other to exhaustion. And now the new guy's in charge. That is what China's doing. Chaos is a ladder for them. They cannot overcome the American led system without creating so much chaos and despair everywhere and confusion that then America's strained and drained. That's where we are now. Okay. We are strained and drained economically. Our military. Yeah.

Bill Walton (28:20)

How did they-

Well, no, I'm going to continue. Your larger point's the right one. I love it. The details, though, we've drained or we've emptied the shells of our armaments. We shipped it all to Ukraine. We don't have anything left to handle whatever might happen in Taiwan. We put ourselves in a position financially where we can't afford, because we shut down our own oil and gas production, or at least hindered it,

Brandon J. Weichert (28:24)

What's that?

Yeah.

Exactly. Yep.

Bill Walton (28:54)

players like Iran to become strategically much more important. It seems like our both our economic strategy has been bad. Of course, the economic strategy is not an economic strategy. Biden administration is really most interested in the in the CO2 climate jihad, and they would really like to shut it shut it down, which would further hobble the United States.

Brandon J. Weichert (28:58)

Mm-hmm.

Bill Walton (29:21)

We're not, just stepping back, it looked like the Biden administration is not interested in protecting America on the world stage. And that was not, I'm not sure I filled in every single dot I wanted to do on that. I wanted to give you the.

Brandon J. Weichert (29:30)

Well, they are ideologues. No. No, no, I know where you're going with this, though. No, I know where you're going with this. I think I don't know if you saw this morning on January 4th of 2024, there was an interview with Mayorkas, the secretary of Homeland Security, in which he said to the CNN interviewer with a straight face, the reason we have this border crisis is because the

the migrants coming up here are fleeing climate change that we created. So that's who you're dealing with. This is the secretary of Homeland Security. So you're dealing with a pack. You're dealing with a pack of ideological naves. All right. Not only are they are they fools, but they believe in the wrong thing. They believe in the wrong ideology, which is why we're being led to the slaughter right now by this administration. One more thing. It isn't just about cutting off oil.

Bill Walton (30:02)

Exactly. Yeah.

and it

Brandon J. Weichert (30:32)

Oh, go ahead. No, oh, sorry. Okay. Um, it isn't just about, yeah, it's, it isn't just about cutting off oil though. More than that, the Biden administration's, um, policies for the climate also call for making the U S military dependent on green energy technology, making our military vehicles go electric. Well,

Bill Walton (30:32)

Go ahead. We've got a little bit of delay in our satellite. Yeah.

Brandon J. Weichert (30:57)

Even if that was possible and if those vehicles were as durable as fossil fuel powered vehicles, the supplies needed to create those vehicles are rare earth minerals. 90% of the rare earth mineral supply is controlled right now by China. So what Biden's trying to do is buy...

The massively more expensive vehicles for the military and equipment for the military that's supposedly green and all of those equipment and military vehicles would be built by supplies exclusively provided by China. That is a terrible idea. It's awful.

Bill Walton (31:35)

Well, can you see the battle of the bulge being losing the battle of bulge because we couldn't find any charging stations for our tanks, which is what we're talking. There's one sort. We've got the plug, but where are we supposed to put this? It's insane. And then we've got the D.

Brandon J. Weichert (31:42)

Right.

Right, right. There's not enough. There's not enough sunlight. There's not enough sunlight, right?

Bill Walton (31:58)

We have the sun, it's shining, the wind ain't blowing, we're dead. But then we've also got the diversity, equity and inclusion agenda, which is also important to this administration and we're flying, we have two flags at each embassy all around the world, one's the American flag, which is, I'm glad they're still flying, the other one is the gay pride flag, and so we're, we're posing our.

Brandon J. Weichert (32:18)

Yes, but if they could replace the American flag with the gay pride flag, they would.

Bill Walton (32:24)

They'd be happy to do it. So, goodness, we're not cheering ourselves up here. But there's no reason to be cheery. I think this is actually, we're laughing, but they're doing things which are strategically catastrophic.

Brandon J. Weichert (32:26)

Oh yeah.

One other thing... Now...

Well, yeah, and it's sort of gallows humor, I guess, on our part. But, you know, the one other thing I would add, I don't know if you saw because you mentioned my first book, Winning Space. You know, I was part of the team. I was on the periphery of that formulation of the Space Force. We talked about space dominance. We talked about putting satellite defenses up. We talked about missile defenses. Well, since Biden took over, Space Force has been obsessed with one thing.

diversity, equity and inclusion so much so that they just promoted a lieutenant colonel who's a man dressed as a woman. And that's who's commanding space force forces right now. It's insane. We have literally crossed the Rubicon of insanity. Our enemies are watching this and they're loving it. This is, this is the greatest self immolation of a superpower imaginable. And it's happened in three years, three years to destroy what took

200 years to build. It's incredible to see.

Bill Walton (33:42)

So we've already got the fire blazing. Let's throw a little more fuel on it. I haven't tracked it. Evidently, the story is out that Biden and Sullivan and Newland and Lincoln are four stooges that are running our global strategy, are thinking about seizing Russian dollar assets to the tune of almost $300 billion.

Brandon J. Weichert (33:47)

Yeah.

Bill Walton (34:09)

and that's also a source of their reserve currency. I believe, I'm not sure where it resides. Have you heard that? Is that true?

Brandon J. Weichert (34:20)

Yeah. No, that is something they're looking at doing. I would say I hope that cooler heads prevail. But, you know, when you've got boy wonder, Jake Sullivan, you know, running the show, let me explain why this is so because people here are 300 billion dollars. I've talked to people in D.C. and they're kind of like, it's not a lot of money when you think about it. But it's really the symbol. Basically, this is part of the Russian reserve currency. This is part of their. Yeah. And so you can bet your bottom dollar whatever is left of it.

Bill Walton (34:44)

Excellent.

Brandon J. Weichert (34:50)

that the Russians and their allies, because we mentioned China's hidden hand, China is manipulating all of this. They're benefiting from all of this chaos. Russia is now a basically vassal state of China because of our policy in Ukraine. And so Russia is looking at what we're proposing to do. And they're saying, you know what? We're gonna go to Beijing.

and Beijing is going to go to Tehran and Tehran is going to go to Caracas and Havana and Pyongyang and all these other countries around the world that are in the global South and we're going to form our own block and we're going to actually do something. We're going to have a full break from the U S dollar as a reserve currency. That'll be how we retaliate. And you're already seeing that play out. And what's happening right now is when another year or two, the debt repayment

Interest on debt repayment in the United States will be higher than U.S. defense spending in one to two years if trends persist. And what happens is if Russia gets China and its and their

partners to bait

Bill Walton (35:49)

The defense budget is...

Brandon J. Weichert (35:52)

is about a 700, I think it's like 700 or $750 billion. And what they're saying now is based on current trends in another year or two, the interest payment alone on the U S national debt will be higher than what the U S defense budget is per year. And so if we go after these Russian reserves, the Russians, they might not be able to respond immediately, but that's only going to force them to double down in creating an alternate reserve currency with China.

And that's going to destroy the U.S. dollar as a reserve currency. And if the U.S. dollar is lost as the premier world's reserve currency, all of those deficits we've been running for 50 years, all of the spending we do, that all goes away overnight. And then we owe the rest of the world money that we could never hope to have. We can't print and spend anymore. In the long run, it might be better because it might actually force us to get our fiscal house in order, but

If it's the Russians and Chinese forcing that situation, you can bet it's gonna be paired to actual military moves by them, which is going to be devastating for what's left of the US superpower.

Bill Walton (37:00)

Well, yeah, you take, for example, China's Belt and Road Initiative, where they've been investing in infrastructure around the world as a way to gain influence and control over Central, South America, Central and South America, and also Africa, some parts of Asia, et cetera, et cetera. That's hard money lending. I mean, they're going in, they've got real terms. It's a very, it's a commercial transaction, whereas you look at what we're doing with our...

Brandon J. Weichert (37:21)

Right.

Bill Walton (37:29)

global international organizations, the IMF, the World Bank, we're lending money for services. We're lending money for things that are not tangible and we're also not attaching any strings to it except would you sort of salute the gay flag, the gay pride flag when you walk by it. We've got a wholly naive approach to dealing in the world.

Brandon J. Weichert (37:47)

And if you're a Catholic nation...

Yeah. And if you're a Catholic nation or a Muslim nation, they don't want to do business with us.

Bill Walton (37:54)

Exactly. So we're being off-putting.

So we've been accused of trying to export democracy, democracy promotion. We're no longer doing that. We're promoting a transgender agenda around the world. And that, you know, if you talk about countries that don't want to deal with that social piece, if we seize the Russian dollar assets, 300 billion, it may sound like a drop of bucket to us, we have a $33 trillion deficit. It's not a drop in the bucket to most of the countries around the world are going to start saying.

Brandon J. Weichert (38:07)

Wokism. Yeah.

Bill Walton (38:30)

We got to get out of this system. We can't trust America at all.

Brandon J. Weichert (38:32)

Yeah. That's right. And you're already seeing, by the way, you know, Russia used to be used to be pretty good about trying to be the middle man when it came to Iran, pinging back between us and Iran. The moment October 7th happened, what you have witnessed is Vladimir Putin has decisively made Russia very obvious. He was very clear that we support Iran. We stand with Iran. Just last week, he flew and met with the leadership of Iran and had a photo op with them in which he.

explicitly said that Russia stands with Iran. Okay, so what you're seeing now is the Beijing-led autocratic alliance throughout Eurasia is congealing into one block. They're working increasingly closely together. They have differences with each other, but they're more threatened, they think, by America. So they're starting to set those differences aside in the near term. And now you're seeing not only...

the branching out of Chinese power through Russia, through Iran, but you're now witnessing the branching out of Chinese power into Latin America. You're seeing Venezuela now threatening to do to Guiana what Saddam Hussein tried to do to Kuwait in 1991. And even if the Venezuelan army is the biggest joke in the world, which it probably is next to the Iraqi Navy, the fact of the matter is the mere fact that they...

The mere fact that they are threatening to do this is going to destabilize our part of the world and cause an even larger refugee flow. Joseph Humeier, a friend of mine who specializes in Latin American affairs, he said to me about two months ago when we were on the lecture circuit, we were having dinner, he and I, and he said that he thinks it could be the greatest refugee wave in the history of the world if this Venezuelans go into Guiana. Coming up.

to our southwestern border, which even now is at record numbers of illegal people coming in. We can't control it. Now imagine if there's a full-throated great power war in Venezuela between, in the United America, between Venezuela and Guiana that forces us to get involved on the side of Guiana and obviously China and Russia to get involved and Iran on the side of Venezuela in our own backyard.

Bill Walton (40:46)

Strikes me we're going to have to put a warning label on this episode.

Beware the gloomy scenario. This is dire, children. This may be R-rated.

Brandon J. Weichert (40:58)

But you have to remember, you have to remember, I think I said this to you before, the Churchill quote, the Churchill quote about him. Explicit. But the Churchill quote about America has always, I think, been true. I think it will pan out in November as well, which is that basically the Americans do all the wrong things before they're forced to do the right thing. And I think that for the last three years, we've done all the wrong things because we could afford to.

but now our backs are increasingly against the wall. Because I can't stress this enough. You change the leadership in DC. It's not a panacea. It's not gonna cure all of our ills because we've got some really deep social rot in this country. But in the near term, these threats that we're facing from abroad, those will die down very quickly if President Trump is reelected. I cannot stress that enough to your audience. The rest of the world, notably the Chinese and the Russians, fear Trump.

They fear him. They think he is crazy. They think he's the Mad King if we're going to go with a Game of Thrones reference again. And I think he might be as well. But the mad exact and Nixon, the Mad King is preferable to Mr. Magoo. OK, because that's what we have right now with Biden. We have an unlikable Mr. Magoo. And so, you know, the rest of the world thinks it's open season on the United States because our leadership.

Bill Walton (42:04)

It works for Reagan.

Well in this case we get Mr. Magoo's evil, evil doppelganger. We've got the evil doppler, doppelganger of Mr. Magoo.

Brandon J. Weichert (42:25)

Right. And his and his corrupt son. Right. And his corrupt son. So this is, you know, this is where we're at.

Bill Walton (42:36)

We actually could turn this.

Brandon J. Weichert (42:41)

What's that?

Well this is where...

Bill Walton (42:44)

We froze up just a bit. We're having a little satellite.

Brandon J. Weichert (42:48)

This is where we're at. The whole system is blinking red. It's been blinking red for about four years. And thank God America, though, usually can course correct because we have election cycles every two and four years. But at some point, as Thomas Sowell warned us in 2010 about Obama, at some point even the United States will reach the tipping point where there is no point of return.

And so that's why I say 2024 is the key theme here. If we can change leadership as untaste as distasteful as people may find Trump. And I know people find Trump distasteful. The fact of the matter is we had a good economy under Trump. We had one of the best in the world and we had a safe country. Now maybe internally there were divisions, but our national security was well protected. And right now it's not. Not only are we internally divided, but our national security is not protected. And our economy is collapsing.

And that is entirely the result of Biden and the Democratic Party. And it has to be stopped in November.

Bill Walton (43:54)

I think that's a last word. I think you've summarized it, although now that's the theme of block number one. Let's spend two minutes on a couple pieces of good news just to kind of relieve the gloom. And we've got this case of Argentina where we've got a new president, Mili, who spent 20 years as an economist, and he is just delightful. He was a lead singer in a Rolling Stones cover band.

Brandon J. Weichert (44:05)

Sure. Yeah.

Bill Walton (44:24)

And I think he did something else equally colorful, but he's a very charismatic guy. And he called, yeah, he was a soccer player, was a very good soccer player, I think goalie. And he is an anarcho-capitalist. And you go anarcho-capitalist, I had to get into this, turns out this is Murray Rothbard, who's a great economist, his term. And the essence of this is that...

Brandon J. Weichert (44:28)

Soccer player or something. Yeah That's it

Bill Walton (44:53)

anything that's done can be done better by the private sector than the state can do. Even things like bridges, roads and tunnels, if we get together and cooperate and make things happen. You think about society without an overweening state, people think, well gee, that would be terrible, nobody would be in control. Well, the point is people self-organize in a way that is in...

delightfully constructive and human. And most innovation has come from this private sector collaboration. He represents that in Argentina, and he's just put out a 350-page manifesto, really, of things that they're going to stop doing rather than they're going to do. And he's a breath of fresh air. Of course, we also worry that he's going to be assassinated.

Brandon J. Weichert (45:29)

Yeah.

Right.

He is he is one of the most unique and. That's right. You and I spoke about this. Yes, he is one of the most unique individuals. You know, I I've I'm not a Latin America specialist, but I have been paying attention more and more just because of the border alone. I've been paying attention more and more to what's going on in Latin America. One of the things I tracked back in the Trump years was the rise of Iair Bolsonaro in Brazil, who is sort of the Trump of Brazil.

He had a very robust space program that he brought in. And I talked about that in my first book. That's all gone now. Colombia, Colombia was like the equivalent of Israel in Latin America. That's how close they were to us. Colombia has now thrown out their longtime right-wing pro-American government, and they've put in a left-wing pro-Chinese government that's probably gonna make a deal with FARC and the ELN, which are the terrorist organizations, the Marxist terrorist organizations.

They've been fighting for 50 years and were beating until now. Ecuador is liberal. Bolivia is liberal. You go down the line, all these Latin American countries, since Biden's taken office, they've all inexplicably or coincidentally, rather, shifted to the left. And Argentina stands and start contrast to the rest of the region. And so my fear is that there is a larger conspiracy afoot, whether it's left-wing ideologues in America, at the CIA and State Department.

Or if it's more probably China and Russia working to put in anti-American forces in our backyard. My fear is that whatever is going on in the wider region will affect Meli in Argentina negatively. He is going to be very much as Bolsonaro was previously. He's going to be the lone voice for reason and, you know, free markets and democracy, true democracy in that region.

And he won't have a friend in D.C. as long as Biden is in charge. And so my fear is it will be very easy over time as he continues because he's serious as he continues to prosecute his agenda and become more and more controversial, more and more powerful, that he will eventually either be removed like Bolsonaro was under very suspicious circumstances or God forbid, they may actually just kill him because he is too much of a threat. And so that's my real fear with with.

with Argentina because Mili is I wish he could be our president. He's great.

Bill Walton (48:08)

I do too. Well, Brandon Weickert, let's plug some books here. The book we can buy right now is our book, The Shadow War. You wanted to plug that, tell us the full title and where we can find it.

Brandon J. Weichert (48:21)

Yeah. Yeah, it's the shadow war, Iran's quest for supremacy. And it's basically, like I said at the beginning, it was written, finished writing it May of 21. And I predicted what's going on now. And it's all because Joe Biden thinks he can make peace with Iran, just like Obama did. And you can't make peace with that regime because they are committed ideologically to a religious belief that does not comport well with the rest of the world.

And also they see themselves as the dominant power, the true heirs of Mohammed, and they're gonna fight to the death to ensure that they're the dominant ones. You can't make a deal with somebody like that. And so the book is a warning and it's an explanation of what we can do. And what we can do briefly is continue Trump's Abraham Accords of bringing together our traditional allies in the region, Israel and Saudi Arabia notably, to contain Iran and to stop their growth. And you can find it.

on any online book really retailer amazon target uh... i would say go to your local bookstore bill but those seem to be dying so people are having most their luck at barnes noble and amazon

Bill Walton (49:30)

Well, Brandon, thanks a lot. This is as always, we're laughing through the gloom, but I think we've done a pretty good job outlining where we are and much coming back sometime soon and we'll see where we've ended up with the Red Sea and those issues there. I hope we're smart enough to get through this. So anyway, thanks everyone for joining and as always, you can find us in all the major podcasts, webcast platforms, CPAC now.

Brandon J. Weichert (49:42)

Love to.

Me too.

Bill Walton (49:58)

And we've got our show also on Substack, so join us there as well and send us some comments if you like this and please subscribe and ask all your friends to subscribe. So anyway, thanks for joining. Brandon Weickert, thanks again.

Brandon J. Weichert (50:13)

Thank you.

Bill Walton (50:18)

sure that everything is loading. We had a little technical thing with Riverside. Do we think, now, are you still?

Brandon J. Weichert (50:19)

Yeah.