

## [Transcript] The Realignment / 333 | Inside the New House China Select Committee with Rep. Mike Gallagher

Marshall here. Welcome back to the Realignment.  
Hey, everyone. Big week. Wednesday is the Realignment Live conference, so be sure to check out the show notes for the full agenda.  
If you can't make it, these episodes, last conversations will be published on the main podcast feed over the next few weeks.  
One other note, as you all have noticed, Sagar and I have started upping the amount of exclusive content we publish to the Realignment's Supercast exclusive subscriber feed.  
If you would like to submit your own questions, participate in broader conversations and comments.  
Plus, of course, support the show.  
Go to [realignment.supercast.com](https://realignment.supercast.com).  
That's how we're funding and building the show.  
Today's episode is with return realignment guest, Representative Mike Gallagher of Wisconsin, who is now the chair of the newly created Select Committee on China.  
We'll discuss the committee, his perspective on the areas they'll focus on, and have a broader conversation about the political controversies in the military slash Pentagon space.  
Hope you enjoy the conversation.  
Congressman Mike Gallagher, welcome back to the Realignment.  
It's great to be back. This is my second time, third time.  
Is there like...  
We did a realignment in your congressional office back, I think, in early 2020.  
And then you, Mike Duran, and I did an in-person at Hudson.  
So this is my downgrading status as I become a remote Zoom podcaster.  
Your library looks very nice.  
I'm now judging you and seeing what we have in common.  
And I hope that if I end up getting to five times appearing on your podcast, if there's some sort of like prize or merchandise, or like a gold jacket that comes with it.  
Yeah, I know the secret here, and I'm sure you're in this game too, is publisher has done me free stuff.  
So you basically should be judging the nice folks at Penguin Random House, not my personal judgment.  
Let's get into the topic at hand.  
We're obviously here to talk about the new China Select Committee.  
Can you just start off by answering a very basic question?  
Like, why do committees matter, especially with the younger audience?

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It's kind of like, listen to all the podcasts you've done. There's just sort of like the China Select Committee. The assumption is basically this is this August thing that really matters. But given, you know, let's say approval ratings of Congress right now, it's probably easier to start with, why should we have confidence that this act of itself matters? Yeah.

Well, as a practical matter, given the number of issues that Congress has to weigh in on, as a member of Congress, you just can't really tackle everything you have to specialize. And so committees are how you specialize, right? Traditionally, members will be assigned to two committees, sometimes three, if you're on a so-called A committee, you know, a really powerful one, like ways and means. That's usually your only committee that you have. So committees at the most sort of practical level at the risk of being simplistic are the way in which Congress organizes itself, and members can specialize so that they're not wasting their time playing whack-a-mole on a variety of issues and getting nothing done. The second answer for why committees matter is that that is where we do oversight. Committees conduct hearings where we call witnesses, both from the executive branch and outside experts, to answer basic questions. We do it out in the open for the American public to see. And so I think committees matter because that's the way in which we operationalize the checks and balances that are so fundamental to our system of government. And I think the third and final reason, I guess I'll be more specific to the select committee on China, usually the speaker creates a select committee for an issue that's receiving insufficient attention from the standing committees of the House. So the permanent select committee on intelligence emerged after a series of intelligence scandals in the 70s, which woke Congress up to the fact that they weren't doing the basic blocking and tackling of oversight of the intelligence community. Speaker McCarthy has now created the select committee on China because this issue is so important and isn't getting the requisite attention and urgency it deserves. And I think it's important to take it back to the first thing. It's a whole of society competition. So China related legislation and policy and oversight falls like along a bunch of committee jurisdiction. So we're going to play a coordinating function to make sure that good ideas

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don't die in sort of the inner committee cracks and that we're going to coordinate the work of armed services or foreign affairs, of financial services, committees that traditionally kind of stay in their stovepipes or cylinders of excellence and don't talk to each other. It's going to be on us to make sure that that doesn't happen. And the entire House is thinking about how we compete successfully with China. So a couple of things I want to pick up on there. So number one, as a professional podcast booker, I can tell you that I could book three episodes a week, 52 weeks a year on the China topic. So what has been missed the past four or five years? Because I think listeners will be like, wait, like there hasn't been enough attention on China. Like what would you say the committee is focused on now under your leadership? That's been missing the past four or five years. Because this has been one of the biggest stories we've been focused on. I think the biggest thing that is still poorly understood, in my opinion, is the nature of, and I think it's something we've talked about in previous podcasts, is the nature of what the Chinese Communist Party calls United Front Work. This is something that Xi Jinping has referred to as a magic weapon. And it's poorly understood because it's sort of a complex mix of espionage operations and influence operations and economic coercion. The United Front Work Department is massive. I mean, it's like 10x what our State Department is. And this is sort of the mechanism through which they corrupt foreign society. So anytime you see a story about a university opening up a Confucius Center or some seemingly benign nonprofit like the Midwest Asian Health Association that is promoting pro-CCP propaganda, usually you peel away one or two layers of the onion and United Front Work is behind that. And I think the various committees have talked about it a little bit. That's a concept I guarantee your average member of Congress doesn't understand, let alone your average American citizen. So I think we have an opportunity to really sound the alarm when it comes to the nature of United Front Work and the way in which the Chinese Communist Party is using United Front Work to corrupt domestic institutions. So that's the first thing. The second thing which has received a lot of attention, but I think is the most complicated aspect of our competition or new Cold War with Communist China is this question of selective economic decoupling. It's very difficult. We've spent decades attempting to integrate China into the global economy. There are good American companies that have a massive footprint in China, have benefited from cheap manufacturing in China.

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Now all of a sudden we have this massive policy shift on China and these companies are thinking, oh my gosh, I need to diversify my supply chain. Oh my gosh, I'm going to find myself in the congressional crosshairs if I run afoul of the Uighur Forced Labor Prevention Act. So thinking through all of the nuances related to selective economic and financial decoupling, particularly when it comes to technology data and dollars, is something all the committees in Congress are going to have to pay attention to. And though it's received some attention, I just bring that up because I think there's a lot of work left to be done. I had some other ideas there, but I'll pause there. Those are the two that jumped out. No worries. I want to get at something you just articulated where you said, A, you've interchangeably referred to competition and Second Cold War. And this seems kind of academic, but I think it actually does matter because like very clearly in the, you know, the committee passed on a bipartisan level, but like there were dissident progressive Democrats in this issue and they very specifically were saying we're in a competition, we're not a court, we're not in a Second Cold War. So A, could you distinguish? Are these interchangeable? Are they the same things? Can they be stacked on one of the other? The Democrats in this case are suggesting it's one of the other. How do you think through the distinction? Because it's mattering if it's put out in statements this way. So I've made the argument for at least five years now that saying New Cold War is instructive and useful, both for the similarities and the differences that it illuminates when compared to the old Cold War. I did not invent this phrase. I think either Neil Ferguson at Hoover or Walter Russell Meade. Neil Ferguson calls it Cold War II. I think Walter Russell Meade after Pence spoke at your institution at Hudson said, wrote an op-ed about the New Cold War. So I'm stealing it from them and they have a lot of credibility. And I've written op-ed sort of identifying the similarities and the differences and the biggest differences that I just talked about. It's the economic entanglement. We were never economically entangled with the Soviet Union. Now, there are some notable Republicans who disagree with that framing. Bob Zellick, I think, wrote a response to my op-ed

and thinks it plays into sort of Chinese propaganda.  
And I think the reason you hear this referred to as a strategic competition as opposed to a Cold War sometimes perhaps reflects the fact that some people are uncomfortable with the New Cold War language. But my argument to them is we should hope that the New Cold War stays cold, that in some ways this may be the best possible a Cold War-like competition with a old Cold War-like ending a la late 80s, Reagan and early Bush 41 may be the best case scenario for how this turns out. Whereas the worst case scenario is hot war. Of nothing else, the Cold War framing reminds us that we should endeavor and do everything possible to ensure that it stays cold and does not escalate to the level of kinetic confrontation, let alone nuclear confrontation. Now, I guess the counterargument to that would be, well, we look back on the old Cold War through rose-tinted glasses and it'd be nice to avoid another Cuban Missile Crisis. It'd be nice to avoid any number of pretty hot wars that weren't direct confrontations between the two major players but still killed a lot of Americans. For example, I'm currently obsessed with the Korean War, killed a lot of Americans. But I don't know, I think that framing is useful, but it may just reflect my own bias as like a Cold War geek. Yeah, I know, of course. So a question that comes from that too then, and this is the danger or the concern with the Cold War metaphor. A, we know how Cold War I ended. It ends in the, not just like the collapse of the Soviet Union, but look at Russia, 30 years later, birth rates, death rates, every single metric you could really, this is what's really fueling the rise of Soviet nostalgia. But if you're the Chinese, if you're a member of the Chinese Communist Party, if this is Cold War I, and they see how, sorry, if this is Cold War II and they know how Cold War I ended up for not just the actual society, but the party, if we're trying to avoid like this moment of, let's say, strategic vulnerability, where they're convinced they need to take gambles, where it's like, look, if we look at our population declines, if we look at the fact that we're kind of boxed in already, we don't really have any allies in the same way the US does, man, we need to take the gamble if the Soviets didn't take in, let's say, the 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, how much are you concerned that embracing a story,

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a script we've already kind of gone through would play upon bad gamble instincts the Chinese may have?  
I'm less concerned about sort of the rhetorical risks and more concerned about the extent to which a rhetoric outstrips the reality of hard power on the ground.  
Put differently, I think the best way to avoid, you know, the Chinese Communist Party doing something stupid this decade is to sort of place inconvenient facts in their path of conquest west of the international dateline, and particularly throughout the first island chain.  
In other words, if you have a sort of an actual credible denial posture, then we can talk in candid terms.  
I think the second thing is that we should, of course, we don't need to be needlessly provocative in our rhetoric, but two ways I think where we can be rhetorically sober and statesman-like is to, one, constantly draw a distinction between the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people.  
And I think as the recent protests in China illustrate, which really forced Xi to make the biggest U-turn of his career and sort of relaxing COVID-zero or ending COVID-zero, I think that shows that the one thing the CCP fears more than anything else than the one thing that might temper his ambitions are its own people.  
And then secondly, I think we need to remind our allies and our fellow Americans who may be concerned about a kinetic confrontation over Taiwan that ours is a defensive strategy at the end of the day.  
We're not seeking to take any territory.  
We're not seeking to remake any foreign society in our image.  
We're trying to defend the frontiers of freedom from totalitarian aggression.  
We're trying to help Taiwan defend itself.  
We're trying to ensure that Taiwan's future doesn't become Ukraine's present.  
I think that's a reasonable strategy.  
That's a goal that we could actually achieve with the right resources.  
So I guess I take your point.  
I mean, you don't want to be just throwing out all sorts of crazy things that are needlessly provocative.  
We want to make sure that our rhetoric is backed by actual capability, combat capability in particular.  
But I guess I'm not as concerned about that.  
Yeah, and I've listened to the interviews you've done around the China Select Committee.  
I know you and these interviews don't like to talk about yourself as much.  
But I think it's in this case, it brings to mind a question

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that I'm sure listeners, especially like younger ones are going to have. I've actually got a couple state legislators who wrote in with questions because they're kind of thinking like, because this is millennial generation stuff. How much does the history and the narratives you tell about the Cold War kind of constrain you? So like, let's say you're writing an op-ed. Are you like, oh, shoot, like, is this kind of like, you know, George Kennan writing the long telegram? Like, because if you think about it, when people confronted those issues the first time around, they didn't have, for good or for ill, a model, a storyline. They were just kind of acting. I think it's fair to say that. How much does history and models kind of constrain you? Well, I think anyone who said they're unconstrained by history is lying to you. Or if they are, it means that they're not studying history. I think these frames or these reference points are on balance very, very useful. I mean, you need some sort of framework for making sense of the world. And mine tends to be historically focused. Now, that being said, I used to be recent on all this literature when I wasted years of my life getting a PhD in political science. There's all sorts of things that have been written about analogies at war and the misappropriation of historical analogies and the tendency for these to become simplistic. But I do think the early Cold Warriors were bound in some ways by certain recent historical examples. Munich probably foremost among them and Munich persists to this day as a sort of historical reference point that policymakers rely upon. It's probably been supplanted by ones that are more powerful. Vietnam, I think, persists from our generation. It's probably Iraq and Afghanistan are the historical reference point. I think that sort of explains a lot of the isolationist sentiment that reemerges sometimes in the Republican Party recently. So I think I think we can use historical case studies and sort of historical conceptual frameworks to make sense of the present moment and sort of navigate an unpredictable future. But it is important to be aware of their deficiencies. You know, one thing I find interesting about the Korean War, and I'm not suggesting it's perfectly analogous to any present situation. I find the Chinese Communist Party's obsession with the Korean War interesting, right? Like the highest grossing Chinese movie of all time is a retelling of the battle of frozen reservoirs. I'm not going to try the pronunciation. Frozen Chosen Reservoir, sorry. I'm like, you know, right in my Marine Corps vest. I'm like frozen chosen. So it's addling my brain, which we sort of like as Marines, we look back on as like, even though it was a retreat, it was a fighting retreat. We inflicted, you know, devastating casualties on the numerical superior force.

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So it's like a sort of proud moment for Marines.

But their retelling is like this moment they stood up to the West and it's sort of like intensifying all this jingoistic sentiment in China and nationalism.

And so I find that interesting.

I'm sort of curious how they use historical examples and frameworks.

And I think it's got to tell us something relevant about Xi Jinping and the Chinese Communist Party and their ambition.

So yeah, I think it's important to be aware of the deficiencies.

But on balance, I think the best thing you can do if you want to be an effective policymaker or if you aspire to be, you know, a grand strategist or whatever the term is, is study history, study history.

I find that most useful.

What is a book recommendation you'd offer on the Korean War?

The best, I think.

And admittedly, the author admits that it's it's a lot of narrative.

So like on a pure historian test, it probably wouldn't be like winning a, you know, a peer reviewed award.

But this kind of war by T.R. Ferenbach is it's awesome.

I mean, it's just so readable.

He has this, he kind of tells it mostly from the soldier and Marine perspective, like people actually in the fighting.

But then he kind of zooms out and integrates the high level policy, whether it's, you know, sort of, you know, drawing the defense perimeter and excluding Korea, whether it's sort of Truman's early decision,

whether it's Eisenhower saying, I shall go to Korea in the 52 campaign.

So it's it's really easy to read, it's fun, and he's just so blunt in terms of his judgments of American culture, American military culture in particular, and really elucidates how after World War Two, in this understandable desire to bring the boys home,

we civilianize the military and we let our guard down and we were unprepared for this new kind of war, which was a war for a limited political objective as opposed to a massive whole of society crusading.

If you think about it traditionally, the American way of war is we get attacked, and all of a sudden we get all fired up.

This is what mead refers to as the Jacksonian impulse.

And then we mobilize and we go all in and we just crush our enemies.

Well, the Korean War was kind of this example without precedent except for the the American for except for the war, the frontier wars and war against a Native American tribes, where we had to do something different.

It wasn't a full crusade.

It wasn't a mobilization was this limited war for an amorphous objective and the American people were very uncomfortable with it.

So this kind of war by Ferenbach, I think, is the best if I had to recommend one.

There's some readable one.

David Halberstam has a good book.



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This is his last book right before he died in a car accident.

Oh, is that for Halberstam?

Yeah, that was his last book, which is.

Oh, interesting.

Coldest Winter, a really readable one.

If I can find it one sec.

Yeah, please.

This makes for great listening on a podcast when I leave the mic and go get a book.

It's called this is this is a Marine bias one.

It's called colder than hell.

A marine rifle company had chosen reservoirs by Joseph Owen, who was a second lieutenant than a first lieutenant at the battle chosen reservoir.

And it's so good.

I mean, you could read it in a day, you know, and it just gives you that kind of young man's perspective on going to war.

And, you know, honestly talks a lot about the challenges of racial integration in the Marine Corps, because this is the first war where you really had integration on a large scale.

And he talks honestly about how particularly among some Marines from the south, there was a little bit of grumbling about, well, you know, and racism, quite frankly.

But the overwhelming feeling was the politicians had starved the military of the resources you needed.

And so whether you were black or white, a Marine was a Marine and everybody had to get along.

So there's sort of a beautiful element to that in this book as well.

Let's actually talk about that for a second because I actually really liked the good faithness of your quote around your concerns, but like let's say the the wokeness debate in the military, you know, you said you kind of came into office into this position and you're like,

Okay, they're just saying this because like that's what you say like this is just politics.

Then you then looked into it and you still had concerns, obviously on 15 different levels like our debates they are not on the same level integrating the military.

But what would you say the lessons of racial integration are for the integration of politics, culture, and just defense policy like what lessons should we take from that period that can inform people today because I really just see at a basic level.

Whether you support them or not, I think that there's a real lack of language or just ability to have a right framework at the Pentagon right now for even thinking through articulating these issues.

You know, that's a great question and I'm going to be, I've never been asked that before so forgive my in elegant response, I think on the most basic level.

The it's important to appreciate that the military actually has a proud history on this issue as one of the first institutions in American society to achieve this I think by and large, what the military still does better than any organization is taking

people not only from with different skin colors but from different parts of the country different geographic backgrounds different socioeconomic background, put some together in a very difficult, a grueling crucible and ask them to work together to get a important and difficult job done and that has that generates in a spree to core that I think transcends race

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transcends class and that's a very powerful thing I think on my own experience.

You know, in my first and second deployments I mean my units, I didn't even think about that but my units were very diverse I mean I had a, I had Hispanic radio operator I had a Hispanic tell them stand list I had a black radio operator I had you know one of my one of my collectors was a, you know, a border patrol agent during this day job and was reservists we had with black white everything in between. And the issue never came up because we were all just kind of working together to get a difficult job done.

I'm not trying to gloss over what I'm sure are individual instances of not only racism but harassment in an organization that includes millions of people obviously you're going to have have that but when you actually dig in to the numbers and we get past the bad

methods that the Pentagon uses when they cite certain studies you realize that the military is actually doing much better than the rest of the population on these issues so I think the first thing is recognizing the military is proud history, and therefore resisting any

attempt to portray the military as this institution where racism is endemic and growing it's simply not true and the more we give into that fiction, the more we exacerbate a recruitment crisis in the military right now and the more we're going to somehow

convince young African American kids in America that they shouldn't join the military, because it's a hostile institution to them and that's simply not the true based on my own experience and based on the best statistics we have out there right now so that's one thing

there's no lesson from early integration of, yeah, in the sense of like, how do you, how do you like deescalate political tensions with these like very like with that that's basically that that's like, this is what I was getting at when I was you know, you

were talking generals who are far more qualified than me. I have just noticed in, like, it's very clear that what's in the shows called the realignment I do not think the current crop of generals the

Pentagon making personnel decisions are up to date on how to navigate a

hyper politicized American political culture. What would you advise them to do that how to do that. I mean this is what you have to do every day.

I think the overall lesson and I don't mean this as a dodge is you just have to focus on warfighting. I mean my my own experience I think the experience of studying that early part of racial integration the military is that the military must be a color blind meritocratic

institution, and perhaps that's like a platonic ideal that we strive for but never achieve it's like an asymptotic journey, but that has to be the ideal because this we're talking about the specific

business of asking young men and women to kill or be killed

for their country to put it bluntly. There simply isn't time for sort of woke identity politics games now if the Pentagon and these these these generals want to come to me with evidence that somehow like a perfectly racially balanced platoon that reflects

the exact racial makeup of America and this is what they always say right they always say we need to make sure the military looks like the rest of society but then again if you dig into the numbers, at least for the enlisted force, the military

the Navy in the Air Force is more diverse than the rest of society so against their own interest

they're making an argument for making the military less diverse and when you make an apples to apples comparison between the officer population and the relevant civilian population because to be an officer you need a college

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degree you need to do a few other things so it's not just enough to compare to the general population, they actually track similarly so begs that it raises the question, what is the problem, we're trying to solve, so I think you just have to constantly get back to what the military is there to do and it's all about warfighting there's a great quote in another I didn't mean this to be like a marine propaganda podcast but the Marine Corps Bible is something called MCDP one Marine Corps doctrinal publication number one warfighting, and they talk about you know they say something like and hopefully I don't murder it too badly. The military exists to fight wars and prepare to fight wars, anything that does not contribute to the conduct of a current war is justified only if it contributes to the preparedness for a future war.

So making sure you're constantly focused on that North Star of war fighting, I think is the best way to get past this current hyper politicized moment and I've come to believe it's not just a matter of a few silly PowerPoints we're making kids watch or

the Marine Corps based Quantico paying their DEI officer more than they pay their their base commander I mean this is turning off a lot of people that are currently on active duty, or thinking about joining the military and it's therefore having the opposite effect of what it's intended but I'd be curious to get your perspective am I a crazy no I think anti wokester I don't know.

I, I think that the one bit of put I think the word like woke especially in this context is like, unproductive in the sense that look at your initial concern. When you first heard about this you're like okay like it's just partisan Republicans bringing this up.

So, I think just like in general, especially during a democratic administration, just avoiding the word woke in this context and just I think being empirical the way you were. I think I think is I think is I think it's pretty helpful and I think I think this is I think this is just developing

I also just think that there is a.

What are we looking for from like the general class is an awareness of how politicized these things are. I think one of the worst things that the sort of like DEI HR industrial complex is, is they talk about these issues if they're just like settled and like anti sort of like it's like hey like this is how organizations are run we have HR policies, we have DEI officers that's the deal. It may work at that at Microsoft, it does not work like that in the US military for a variety of reasons including civilian oversight of like that institution itself.

So that's what I think the real, because once again I think to your point there's no like answer quote unquote to solve this this of that. It's more just like there needs to be a mentality framework and it's like when I always struggle when you know Pentagon folks like speak to conservative about how climate change is the biggest national security security threat like that make like maybe true in an empirical that is like not a political like you that is actually like hyper political statement in today's political context.

So I would just say like hey or maybe just leave it out for a chapter two and don't lead with that. I'm another question.

I'll just one point on that. Yeah, because I actually in my primary issue with all the arguments that the Navy in particular have been making and the flag officers been making is that it's as I dug into it over the course of a year.

It's all and I've written about this in national review, if anyone's interested.

Based on garbage social science like garbage and the best social science like these we've had all

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these recent meta analyses which is a fancy word for saying the analyze all you know the most recent findings and whatever there's like, you know you can you can sort of correctionally tell what all of the base the best peer reviewed studies are telling you show that DEI initiatives like implicit bias training and other things are either either have no impact or an actual negative impact the increase inner group hostility and the studies that the the military is citing to make child claims like diverse teams are X percent and they put percentages on it more likely to accurately assess the situation as if you could quantify that. The studies are garbage and I guarantee you the flag officers and general officers haven't even read the studies that they're citing when they stand in front of Congress and say things like diverse teams let inclusively perform better and they're actually obscuring an interesting research question an interesting empirical question which is how do you improve lethality what is the best makeup of a team to improve lethality like that's that's an interesting question to me that gets obscured by bad social science the the final thing I'd say I'm sorry to go on on this no place is okay if we have a problem with certain minority groups being underrepresented in the higher echelons of our officer core and in certain services you do right I think there's a dearth of of African American officers and some in some services and perhaps Asian Americans are underrepresented in others okay I'm interested in understanding why that is what why is that and certainly I think we would all agree if it was because you had promotion boards comprised of racist white guys saying oh hell no well that would be unacceptable that's I have not seen that in the military I guess I can't prove definitively it doesn't exist but if if racism we're standing in the way of promoting people based on their the job they've done and their merit I think we would all object and I would I would fire those bad actors I have no evidence that that's happened but that seems to be what DEI advocates are implying but the reverse can't be true we can't start promoting kernels and generals because of the color of their skin because that would be a racially essentialist way to conduct Pentagon business and we had the top personnel officer in the Navy go out there and say well we need to reinstate state photos potentially during selection boards so that we can judge people based on the color of their skin I'm like it's crazy like we're going back to a crazy time so but it could be that the variables that are that are driving the under representation are of different groups are things upstream of the military entirely right it could be lower for the officer corps again you have to college degree maybe there's just a lower attainment of college degrees among that particular population I don't know I haven't I haven't dug into that aspect of it maybe I mean you tell me like okay let's get into uncomfortable territory like I'm white you're black do you think I'm not appreciating the way in which the African American community like looks at the military do you think there's a stigma attached to it I don't know I'm all I'm saying is and I'm pretty sure by the way to your point I'm pretty sure like the percentage of like African Americans in the like military it's actually like slightly higher than like you're like you know population thing what I really like what you're saying I think this gets to the first

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principles bit here that maybe like the wokeness debate kind of obscures is like look the ideal of a military is a color blind institution the disaster on obviously you know segregated military was a disaster on 15 different levels but from a first principles perspective the job of the US military is to your point lethality fight and win wars saying that there can't be black officers in charge of white officers you can't mix that made that made no sense especially given the track record moving forward so if there is an instance to your point of it's by definition provable that there could be like a bias set of instances in the like promotion of kernels to Brigadier generals but then let's make it about that and not this old man Saxon McKinsey study from 2015 like you should basically what you what you're what I think is helpful for what you are basically suggesting to folks who would be on the woke side of this debate is get very very very specific focus on the first principles here and and and focus away from just like once again this is the basic fairness thing I think you're most like anti work anti woke like Vivec Ramos from me like activists would say to themselves like oh wow if there's like a general who is just like provably like racist against black kernels then that's a huge issue and we should deal with that because that violates a basic fundamental value fairness American things that's a good place I want to hit I want to hit something else in the Wisconsin context because like once again I talked to a lot of progressives about this issue and this is what the real concern is so obviously a bunch of progressives like voted against the select committee because of the you know rise and like you know Asian hate crimes like that's like the rhetorical talking point from from my perspective here's what I'm slightly more interested in because I just don't see any empirical evidence that you know the homeless man attacking an Asian woman in the New York City subway is like driven by our China policy debate I'm welcome to be I'm like once again we're making I'm making an empirical claim I welcome evidence of that but I don't think that's true. That said, you're from Wisconsin you represent Wisconsin. There's interesting history here which I haven't really heard people ask you about so a huge German American population in Wisconsin. The Germans started screw the Kaiser. What's debate would we're most in a separate podcast, but like that's a that's that's a just war I think is justifiably supported a couple different levels, but that justified intervention leads to the lynching of a German man, all sorts of discrimination like I'm adopted so this don't ignore my race here, like my great great grandparents stock speaking German in the home because of discrimination in Pennsylvania. This is a real thing. Japan, World War two, not a Wisconsin thing is much more of a California thing, interment camps and finally Cold War one, the red scare in all three of these examples, a justified US policy, eventually transitions into some form of often government supported discrimination against Americans on the racial national or like creed based levels. What have you learned from those three examples also speaking to your I mean I think isn't Joseph McCarthy buried in your district. What what what what what if you this is more what I'm concerned about, not what was not what was happening in 2020 I'm here's my only put it frankly. I'm sure you saw that CSIS like war game that came out a few weeks ago in the war game like two US carriers are sunk. I'm concerned like what happens to an Asian person if 12,000 sailors soldiers

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airmen Marines are killed like in a mass in a massive in a massive battle. What have you learned from the three examples I gave about that scenario.

Well, to connect it to the earlier strand of conversation, were they able to where their rockets able to hit our carriers because they were fired by diverse teams that were led inclusively do we measure that on when it comes to like quantifying our enemies capability. No we don't.

I'm pretty sure probably the Chinese probably do track how Han there on there is actually probably something on there. But though you see that also that's like when we go down this path of like self loathing and like given to this fiction that

America is like this irredeemably racist place like we surrender this natural advantage because in this competition or new Cold War, our adversary happens to be a profoundly racist and chauvinist entity in the form of the Chinese Communist Party which by the

way is conducting genocide right now there's not much worse than genocide. Okay to your point about Wisconsin history. Well one I have in my office in DC I have a political cartoon of Bob La Follett our most famous politician being pinned war medals by the

German Kaiser because he led the opposition to our entry into World War one filibuster it for a while opposed the the earlier bill to arm merchant vessels, most of the people I voted against in the House and Senate were from Wisconsin for the reason you mentioned

a huge German American population. And then as for Joseph McCarthy, the, the first of two marine intelligence officers ever elected to Congress from Wisconsin, I being the second. I, I think, and the third example you mentioned was

the Japanese in World War two once again intervention leads to federally or a state supported discrimination. Yeah, so I listen I, I think the progressive argument against the committee is a bit disingenuous, I think it's more just a reflexive

opposition to anything the Republicans are doing. But if I were to be, I guess, if I were to consider it a good faith argument and maybe there are some that voted against it that have genuine concerns about this feeling anti Asian American rhetoric or anti Asian

rhetoric in general, I would say two things. One, as I said before, we have to make a distinction between the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese people. And I think one of the things we are going to do on this committee, from the start in a bipartisan fashion is

how the Chinese Communist Party is compromising American sovereignty to go after Chinese Americans on American soil. So it's almost a the reverse of McCarthyism if McCarthy was making, you know, exaggerated claims about Americans being

communist agents, part of our job on the committee is to protect Americans from the influence and agents of the Chinese Communist Party. So that's one thing I'd say. And the second thing I'd say is I guess the the onus is on us in the

in me in particular as chairman just to conduct myself and ensure that all of our Republican members conduct ourselves in a way where we're not irresponsible with our rhetoric or allowing any sort of hate filled propaganda to to come out of our

work. So I'm not, I'm conscious of it. I'm not concerned about it. I think the lesson of Joseph McCarthy is that there's always a risk of going overboard. And so as I think about this as much as I'm going into this with a sense of urgency and I want to

accelerate a lot of policy and legislation that I feel like has not gotten enough attention and I feel

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like we're losing time and not time is not on our side. I also feel like the committee will at times have to play a restraining function and put it differently in the context of a 2024 presidential race. We don't want this sort of pressure from all the candidates to be like the top hawk on the most important foreign policy issue of our day which is China to sort of push us off the reservation into policy that doesn't serve the American interest. So I guess at the end of the day it's on me to prove that the committee is a forum for serious sober statesmen like debate and discussion that ultimately defends Americans and defends, you know, the Chinese diaspora from the aggression of the Chinese Communist Party, if that makes sense.

Yeah, no, it does. So I want to be conscious of your time. So two last topics. Number one, and this is kind of a friendly concern having listened to your rhetoric on the TikTok issue.

Here's what I don't understand. I'm just speaking frankly here.

I don't understand why you all are starting with like the ban language, when from a, how do we articulate the people, the people who aren't already on our side. You don't just start with grinder in Siphius in 2019 so like what I'm referring to is in

2019 grinder and LGBTQ, you know, trying to be generous here. Dating app, which is, you know, what we're referring to here, actually was like,

I thought you meant like you didn't have the number like what is it to stop at Q now or what are the, no, no, no, I more meant with I was trying to be generous with describing grinder as just being a nice little dating app with the most extreme of the various dating apps.

But you know, Siphius actually forced the force sell sale of grinder from a Chinese company to an American entity. So because like whenever I talk about this with folks like give the argument you give which is like come on guys, Cold War one, we wouldn't sell telecom,

other like vital communications like technology or allowed to be owned by you know, foreign companies, this is the same principle here. So why aren't we just starting with forced sale, have you know the government, you know at a federal level like impose a ban I'll you know shout out my future sister in law here.

I'm Hannah, you have tick tock on your phone and you are a marine officer. That is a terrible decision that should not be allowed and has nothing to do with a forced sale policy as the personal call out there she's listening.

My point basically is just that why don't you just start with the force sale. And if that doesn't happen, then you do the ban.

It's a great point. So wait, future sister in law does that mean you're getting married.

It's September. Congratulations. Thank you. Very exciting. We're excited. Oh, you don't want to reveal personal details, never mind, but marriage is awesome.

Kids are awesome. It's all good. Yeah, someone who did it three years ago and it's now my life is dominated by two little well three human beings two of which are under the age of three.

It's a great experience. So congrats.

Well, to Hannah and to others I would say the bill that I've introduced that's currently the only bipartisan bill and it's bicameral Rubio has it in the Senate allows for a forced sale.

So that in my opinion that would be an acceptable outcome. So you could do the full ban, which I'd be in favor of or you could do a forced sale to an American company as was attempted in the Trump

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administration, but failed and we've sort of analyzed that case study and we feel like in the way we've constructed

the bill gotten around any potential legal objections. There's a potential bill of attainder issue, but our bill actually if you read it is not specifically targeted at tiktok.

It's any social media app or company that's controlled by one of five foreign entities, China, Russia, Venezuela, Iran and North Korea, but tiktok and WeChat are like the biggest examples of that.

Iran's tech sector isn't really, they're not sending their best when it comes to this issue. If you're on an Iranian sort of like dating app, you're probably not getting the best set of choices.

So maybe upgrade to like, I don't even know. I missed the whole dating app thing. So I don't even know what the good ones are at this point.

But so to allow for a forced sale, and I guess what I'm wary of, there's an ongoing CFIUS review of tiktok right now. And I think it reflects the same divisions that were there in the Trump administration, like Treasury has one view on this, DoD and some and DoJ might have a different view on it.

They might try and split the baby and do like, all right, well, if you have data centers that are being a poor or, you know, there's questions about who owns the algorithm and algorithmic transparency that I think may not get us the concern, may not alleviate the concerns on the national security side, but a forced sale to an American company would be an acceptable outcome in my opinion. If you addressed the, you didn't sort of wind up in that split the baby land.

Another question, another question. This was another listener question from your episode. I think this was the good fellows one. Why is a social media company, the same thing as like a telecom company during the Cold War. So like folks are like, yeah, it makes sense that the Saudis or the Japanese or the

Soviets can't just like buy like critical like telecommunications infrastructure. Why do you think if that policy is justified like social media is the same, like these that these are of like that these aren't just these are like like type that it's

similar to what in the cold war. So in the metaphor, you said we wouldn't let the Soviet Union purchase like time or like a cable company, this this or that. And I think folks hear that and they say, okay, that makes sense. We wouldn't have a debate over whether or not the CCP or a CCP line company could buy Comcast, but there wouldn't be a debate there. I think where people sort of separate if they buy that Cold War premises, why is social media the category equivalent of cable routed through the ground.

I actually think it's worse. Okay, because I think it's more, it's more addictive. I think at least in one of the interviews where I use that analogy, maybe this is proving the point of your earlier question, which is I got to stop using historical

analogies because I'm always struggling for like the perfect one. Why it's like, not everything's like 1952 and the Eisenhower administration. Okay. I those those forms of media, be it radio, be it TV, be it good old fashioned print, weren't as addictive as social media is

in general and TikTok is in particular. And they didn't have the and and I guess this is where I think the analogy is opposite. We just in America, we have a concept of something called the private sector.

There is occasionally those lines get blurred and there's been brutal debates about government collection of metadata on phones and you know where does the private sector and in the government



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national security equities began I get that but by and large, we have a private sector we celebrate it it has a ton of legal protections is a beautiful thing. I would submit to you that in China. The concept of a private sector is amorphous at best and non-existent at worst in a system where any private company so-called private company quote and quote can be subject to the whims of the Chinese Communist Party, where you have CCP cells embedded in their corporate governance structure where they had a bite dance pledges to make sure that all future product lines follow appropriate political control.

I just think it should make us wary of allowing a company like that to have such a dominant position in our media landscape and I think it's actually worse because of the highly addictive nature of these apps and I've been persuaded by Jonathan Hyde and Greg look

at the work they've done on how social media is increasing anxiety depression and suicide particularly among young women in America so you have the collision of kind of a hostile foreign entity and like an internal domestic problem with addiction and to social media and increase social isolation and these two things combined conspire to create a massive problem for America so I recognize this makes me like the least cool millennial politician in America but I've just been persuaded that this is an urgent national security issue.

Well, I have good news to you there is no such thing as a cool millennial.

And this is kind of like my, I move got to in Zoolander crazy pose question.

We're seeing all these war games like there's a bipartisan consensus. It really feels like there isn't a sense of urgency and aggression, given how heated the rhetoric and the frameworks are like once one speaker Pelosi is taking that trip to Taiwan and everyone

is making the joke about how she's sending a fundraising email, saying like you know the J 10s are like caught up with us. If we're at that point, it really seems like from a whole society perspective, we should be just doing much more like with energy so a can you answer

like tearing my hair out as a podcast who just talks to people who do things like it seems like there's not a sense of urgency like what's what's your take on that and then to, if you were let's say, your world war two equivalent and there's like all this energy needs to be brought to the table, but what would you just lay out as the agenda on all these fronts whole society that we should take so take it away we'll close out with this.

Well first on the got to one of the first big articles I wrote as a member of Congress started with that crazy pills quote, my staff argued aggressively against it at the time, saying it was not appropriate for a member of Congress though I was only 33 at the time to be using these references but I stand by it okay so we're on same wavelengths. It actually leads to what I think is the most important aspect of this competition and where we need to inject the most urgency was an article about rebuilding the navy.

It's my belief that hard power deters the administration's failure to deter the Russian invasion of Ukraine was because they relied mostly on soft power the vague threat of sanctions and mean tweets from the State Department to deter Putin and when you're dealing with someone like Putin or Xi Jinping only hard power of specifically American hard power gives you the chance to deter so if I were to inject energy and urgency into any aspect of this competition it would be surging hard power west of the international state line and putting hard power on Taiwan to make Xi Jinping Xi Jinping think twice, putting hard power in the southern Japanese islands and northern Philippine islands to make him think twice,

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putting more hard power in northern

Australia and US territories compact states in Alaska, there needs to be a crash program in particular to surge certain missile systems now that we're no longer bound by the intermediate nuclear forces treaty, we can put ground launch missiles on various pieces of territory and get on the right side of the hard power cost curve in terms of threatening to sink their ships in the way they're threatening to sink our ships so that is the biggest thing to attack that with a sense of urgency and I think that gives us our best chance to avoid or prevent World War

3 into my more isolationist colleagues. That is what I'm all about I'm dedicating my I like, I wake up every day and I write out a little thing about like my mission in Congress is to prevent World War three, I'm not trying to provoke a war I'm trying to prevent it

is one thing. The second thing on the economic side is I really think we need to stop funding our own destruction so for tax advantage entities, particularly university endowments, I don't think they should be investing in China in general and Chinese genocide and military in particular, I would say the same for state and local pension funds. And then finally when it comes to sort of the ideological aspect of this competition. We really need and I'll go back to defending history, I think the right period of history to study here is the Reagan

Reagan was a master at ideological warfare, all of his speeches were carefully crafted to speak directly to the Russian people at the same time he was subtly undermining the Soviet regime, and he drew upon Russian literature and culture.

We need to revive that lost art of ideological warfare and it's frustrating for me to admit this as a member of Congress, but I've come to believe that it's going to require presidential level leadership to tackle all three of those things with a sense of urgency

and try and do it on the select committee, but admittedly there are limits to what you can do from the legislative branch in matters of foreign policy so my hope is at some point we get a better non boomer president who understands the stakes of this competition, and is really willing to lead the American people in the same way that Reagan was.

That is, I guess there's one last thing go there I like my said last question. I appreciate did you vote against the chips act.

Okay, so the reason I bring that up is like chip back is very sexy it's very like it's the conventional wisdom thing to say, like in these spaces so can you just close on like the economic industrial front like why did you vote against chip acts and like what is your like alternate model do you think we better a few reasons one there was it seemed like the Democrats in the Senate pocketed.

My my thing at the time was that chips would be a reasonable bipartisan compromise and we would abandon the the hilariously named inflation reduction act which was mostly a waste of government money and a Green New Deal Trojan horse, but it seemed like the Democrats pocketed the chips at concession, and then turned around and betrayed the Republicans, and did the inflation reduction act as well so those things combined seemed very irresponsible for us to be doing.

The second thing is, I had a my own little thing where the the endless frontiers act of significant provisions of it were changed and I didn't like the changes we don't have to go into that know we don't have time.

I wonder, and I'm open to being wrong on this like if five years from now we have a bunch of

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domestic chips that chip fabs in America, and we're weaning ourselves off our dependency on East Asia for chips manufacturing.

I will go out there and say I was totally wrong about this but I suspect two things are going to stand in the way of that.

One, the regulatory process through which these fabs get approved is still crazy outdated ossified. It's the same reason our infrastructure is the highest cost in the developed world and it takes 10 years to build a road because you got to get the regulatory approval until we pair the funding with the regulatory significant meaningful regulatory form. I'm not sure we're going to see the outcome. We want the other big constraint to this is a workforce issue. I mean, you just talked to any industry, particularly in the defense industry base they can't find human beings to build this stuff so maybe what's in my mind as opposed to direct subsidies would be a more coherent and sensible regulatory environment combined with the appropriate tax incentives. I do think however the recent export controls on chip some components from the administration on balance are good.

I like what I saw from Gina Romondo and commerce. So, you know, the other thing that keeps lingering the background of all this. This wasn't an argument I made at the time is, is there a world in which we are actually undermining deterrence when it comes to an organization of Taiwan by making this massive effort to wean ourselves off TSMC chip dominance right like they I mean the Taiwanese refer to it as their silicone shield. I'm not saying it's not worth doing it but that's just one thing worth thinking through when we think about deterrence and we tend to think

about deterrence purely in military terms and we rarely do a good job of integrating the economic and financial aspects of deterrence. I'm so glad you said this because like my little like conjecture based based on the Ukraine debate is that isolationists are going to say,

Why aren't we doing this at home? Let's not defend Taiwan. They're basically going to they're going to they are clearly going once they focus on that issue. They are clearly going to tie those things together and we'll have this weird situation where this like there's this like not serious what's going to happen at home and let's not defend Taiwan thing that's going to like mix together I think it's important in mid mid 2020 so that's just something that I just kind of like noticed rhetorically but you know, congressman I have a final question for you. Yeah, what when it comes to your wedding, are you

kind of banned? I have some advice on this front. What are the staples in your opinion? This is the this is the so I'm doing a I'm doing okay this is okay if you've got a second I'm very interested in your thoughts on this so what went to yeah so it's

anything doing a DJ. That's the okay. That's the take I can see both sides I live man super expensive. At the end of the day, I was persuaded that it was a good investment. I would make maybe harvest some savings from flowers and center pieces you

made or I don't think are important and I would plow all of that into banned and booze that would be my recommendation for a wedding but admittedly that's not probably not the best thing to say to your significant other but I don't know that's just my only my only point. Folks news you can use from congressman Mike Gallagher. Thanks so much for joining me on the realignment. Thanks Marshall is fun.

Hope you enjoyed this episode. If you learned something like the sort of mission or want to access our subscriber exclusive Q&A bonus episodes and more go to [realignment.supercast.com](https://realignment.supercast.com) and

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