Marshall and soccer here. Welcome back to the realignment

Hey everyone got a great episode we interviewed

Presidential candidate Vivek Ramastrami about his candidacy what he's focused on his agenda's priorities pushed him a bit

Only at 30 minutes not quite the format length we typically enjoy

But this is what you get for entering in this side of the game. Hope you all enjoy this conversation We'll definitely

Vivek Ramaswamy welcome to the realignment good to be on guys

Absolutely. So Vivek, uh, I think it's important just to put this out at the top one of the ways

I became prominent honestly was just by interviewing newer candidates to the field unconventional candidates and kind of treating them seriously

So at the top, I just want to say you to the audience

I'm going to treat you the same way that I treated Andrew Yang Tulsi Gabbard President Trump Uh, Mike Pompeo any of the people that we've interviewed here. So I think at the top number one What is the case for your candidacy?

Yeah, the case for my candidacy is I'm not advancing somebody else's vision

I'm advancing my own and it is a vision for national identity at a point where we lack one

I think America is in the middle of this identity crisis where if you ask most people my age most people your guy's age for that matter

What does it mean to be an American in the year 2023?

You get a blank stare in response and I think that's a problem

And I think much of what the republican party is focused on attacking from wokeism to gender ideology to

Climatism to covetism for that matter, which I've also been a critic of a fierce critic of

Is just a symptom of that deeper identity crisis and I don't see another candidate in this field

Stepping up to actually offer an affirmative vision of national identity that can dilute that vision to irrelevance

And as part of that, I'm also willing to take on issues that other candidates in this field

Bluntly seem unwilling frightened or unable to take on I've committed like what I've committed to end affirmative action in America

Okay, I would love for another republican candidate

All of whom behind closed doors say they agree with me on this to say that out loud

That could be done by executive order most affirmative action in America

Not a lot of people know this the original sin the head of the snake was a Lyndon Johnson era executive order

Every republican president since then could have crossed it out

Instead they complained about affirmative action without actually doing something about it Same thing with respect to climate

Ouick thing like isn't part of the reason why republicans don't do that is

Republicans are doing terribly in the center adjacent suburbs

I think the last thing a republican would want to convey is that they're going to start a racial battle with the supreme court

Like isn't that why they're not doing it?

I mean, maybe it's political calculus. I don't I don't do the political calculation

I asked the question about from this is why I make this about American identity from the standpoint of what it means to be an American

What are the values that define being an American part of that to me is getting ahead

Not on the color of your skin but in the content of your character and your contributions

That's what it means to put merit back in America

And I think that there's actually broad bipartisan consensus around that more than most people appreciate

California you'll remember what was it prop 16 a couple of years ago that in liberal state

We still voted down on the back of saying that you know, no, we don't want to amend the state constitution to allow this form of discrimination

So I think actually this this meek attitude to think that actually we got a compromise and somehow we take these two sides as given

That's not my theory of national unity. My theory of national unity is we achieve national unity in this country

Not by showing up in some proverbial middle and say can't we all hold hands guys and sing kumbaya and get along no

We achieve national unity in America by embracing the extremism the radicalism of the ideas that set this nation into motion

And you want to know the case for my candidacy?

I'm willing to embrace the extremism and the radicalism of those american ideas

Even without regard to simple partisan labels or political calculations

And my bet is the american people are going to be able to tell the difference between a foot soldier in the fight against

Wokism who's spouting off talking points that you might have read in a book or in a binder given to you by a political consultant versus somebody who's actual

original bone deep conviction

It is that drives this agenda and in my case

It's definitely the latter from affirmative action to the climate religion in this country

To willingness to use the military to solve the fentanyl crisis by going after cartels in Mexico and using our military to protect the southern border

Basic ideas that actually transcend. I would say partisan lines

But which other republican candidates appear too fearful bluntly to be able to say out loud

I'm taking those I'm taking on those sacred cows and you know

I say this as a vegetarian and new american myself take those cows to the slaughterhouse because That's what it's going to take to spawn a national revival. That's unapologetic. Here's something. I wonder too

Um, you kind of had a berry goldwater adjacent movement a moment when you were talking about like extremism

he had the famous extremism and the defense of liberties no vice you're saying we get the extremism

Of uh, the ideals that you're describing

Do you get the sense that the american people are asking for extremism right now?

We look at the 2022 midterms

Like that was the definition of a moment where like if the right thought there was always populous energy

There's always aggression and it actually just turned out people don't like stop the steal and want things to be pretty normal

That's the joe biden case. What's the response to that?

Yeah, so I don't think people are looking for partisan extremism because partisan extremism is a unproductive but be boring

It's not even coherent. I mean, what does it mean to be a republican today?

What does it mean to be a democrat today? These questions are on the table. They're circular

Whereas I think what people are hungry for is a sense of purpose and meaning and identity

And cause I mean, I think our generation all generations in this country

They are so hungry for purpose at a moment in our history

When the things that used to fill that void from faith to patriotism to hard work to family those things have disappeared

And that's what creates this moral vacuum in its wake. So are people hungry for it?

And I think people are starved for it a sense of what it means to be american a revival of a national identity

That we long for hungering to be part of a bigger nation

Filling that hunger with something greater than transgenderism or wokeism or climatism. Yes, people are hungry for it

Here's my problem though is the republican party so far has not been stepping up to deliver An affirmative inspiring vision to fill that void reviving ideas like merit like free speech and open debate as our mechanism to settle political questions

Rather than censorship reviving the idea that who would have ever thought the people we elect to run the government

Are the ones who actually run the government rather than this cancerous federal bureaucracy? These are basic american ideas and in fairness. I'll tell you this

Those are extreme ideas for most of human history. It was not done this way all the way up to 1776 on the other side of the pond in old

World Europe. It was not done this way

So we're the weirdos here on the american side of the atlantic in the post 1776 version of our country

But that is part of what makes us who we are and we've obsessed so much over

You know our different, you know, we have similar shades of melanin on this particular call, but across the country

Different shades of melanin who cares whether we look different whether we're diverse

If there's nothing greater that binds us together across that diversity

And if there's one thing that I think our citizenry is hungry for it is a revival of that commonality those basic ideals

And dare I say yes embracing the extremism of those ideas?

I will not apologize for it because that's what it means to be american one of the talks about extremism right now

Vivek here in washington is a republican standoff with the

Biden administration over the debt ceiling and cutting medicare and social security

This isn't something I've heard you get way on. Where do you stand on entitlement programs?

So they'd be untouchable in any sort of deal if you were the president of the united states

What would you plan to do so with those programs?

So the first observation I'd make is this is again another one of these strawman partisan struggles I mean one of the things that republicans ought to be honest about was that spending was high under president trump

I'm actually an unapologetic America first conservative. I think in order to put America first We have to actually redefine and rediscover what America is

Now donald trump he had a lot of things right one of the things he didn't have right was the amount of money he's spent

So I think that this is far from a partisan struggle. So I generally favor spending less money as the federal government

What about my programs?

Yeah, I just wanted to give you the give you the broad backdrop

So look, I think that there are easier ways to solve this than just then sort of dig trenches

And then pretend like we have some sort of disagreement about it take somebody who's earned over \$10 million over their life

Should they be eligible for medicare in the same way as somebody who hasn't earned over a million dollars in their life?

I think we have to be able to have that discussion rationally without using

Toxic code words like means testing. I think if you get it really specific, I mean, that's a line that I would draw

Okay, I think that somebody

10 million 10 million and and that's a lot of people in this country

And I think that you know in my you know a full policy team early days first week of the campaign $\overline{}$ This is not one of my campaign priorities

Rock solid on the on the 20 or so things that I do plan to deliver

This is not admittedly entitlement reform is not part of my case for the presidency

You asked me what was I'll tell you about it

This isn't on the list, but it is something that a leader of the United States is gonna have to consider And the way I think about this is that

There are reasonable incremental steps we can take to get the country back on the right track

The way I saw for what is on my agenda is shutting down many swaths of the federal government

Because part of where you get spending bloated the way it is is if you put people in a job

They think they're supposed to do the job and all jobs in the federal government

Involves not only spending money on their own employment, but spending on money on behalf of the federal government itself

And so when I say shut down the Department of Education

Part of that is because the Department of Education has no reason to exist

But part of that at the federal level

But also part of that is because it's a step towards creating a culture in the federal government

Of not only spending less money, but regardless of the federal government

But also spending less money but returning it to the people to whom it belongs

So that's gonna be my main contribution and I've laid out the fact that I'm gonna shut down government agencies

I'm gonna actually fire employees pursuant to Article 2 of the Constitution

Which says that actually the U.S. President runs the executive branch of the government

No matter what civil service protections and statutes say

Those are the kinds of issues I'm most focused on

But if you're gonna ask me directly, I'll tell you where I am on this entitlement reform program There's a thing like we're because I you know this like I'm not a huge fan of like 2000s George will be Bush like naming the president of like Taiwan got your journalism

The reason why we're asking you I think this actually matters beyond what you're saying though is We could say whatever we want

What matters what the voters actually think

And I could tell you the Donald Trump 2016 voters

Actually did not like how Jeb Bush was not aligned with their vision of how entitlement social security actually worked

But I want you to reckon with here right so talk about like you're saying these values of like merit and like individualism relate how that vision translates into how we treat old people in this country Because this is frankly a debate with Obama you're not being overturned with social security prioritization failing that the left has broadly won

So express that entitlement debate through the values you said at the top of the episode Yes, so look I think that we have to start with the lower hanging fruit to start a spawn a cultural revival

So here's my theory of the case philosophically and then I can get to the specifics as much as I want on policy

So so my view is a lot of the things we're going to have to do in this American moment will demand sacrifice

The one I've been most explicit about is decoupling from China I've called for a declaration of independence from China sounds great on paper in practice

A lot harder than it sounds why because it's going to involve some trade-offs we got addicted to buying cheap stuff for a long time

That was a purposeful bargain we entered but it got us into the precarious geopolitical position we're in where we're in this codependent relationship with an enemy

That's different than anything we ever experienced with the Soviet Union in the last Cold War Wait so quick to understand if you understand this then so what you're saying is under your presidency assume you could get this passed or whatever you could make this happen

We cannot do business if anyone in China and Americans so I'm not just like a small business like garage cannot source its goods from China that's what you're saying

Well I'm going to be explicit about a couple of things of what decoupling means but at the limit we have to be prepared to tell US businesses that you cannot do business in China unless and until the CCP reforms its behaviors or the CCP falls

And then for reasons I can explain to you because I think China is in a very precarious position right

now and we're working within a short window we pull the rug out from under them that delivers that reform and possibly the fall of the modern CCP as we know it

Xi Jinping shot China's economy in the foot to take his third term last October so there's a complex geopolitical view here that informs my view that this actually leverage we exercise to defeat them economically so that we never have to militarily

I could go on for hours about that but I bring that back as an example to say that yes we have to be willing as you pointed out to make some short term sacrifices in order to achieve long run game But I think the American moment right now calls not for Chamberlain it calls for Churchill it calls for thinking on the time scales yes I'm not shy to say it time scales of history rather than in the time scales of an electoral cycle

And if we're able to do that okay then we then I think our kids and grandkids are going to be a good place but we can only do it if we know what we're sacrificing for and that's why it comes back to this case for national identity

Okay you know entering a family think about values I inherited from my parents right entering a marriage having kids raising a family these things involve a sacrifice and tradeoffs to but you can make those tradeoffs if you know what you're sacrificing for

I think it's the same thing in your capacity not just as a family member or parent but as a citizen of this nation to and that's why my focus and the next president United States no successful president No successful successful president in history has been able to take on everything at once you pick the few things you're going to do clearly pledge what you're going to do go deliver and accomplish it in my case it's going to be to fill that void of a missing national identity by

In place setting into motion a set of policies that help us revive that sense of natural national culture and pride start to declare independence from China and begin to demonstrate how we're able to make the short run sacrifices in order to do what actually needs to be done in the long run on the scales of history

And so I think about my priorities there sure you're calling this America first 2.0 and it really raises a question I know a lot of Trump people here in Washington I interviewed the president several times what was wrong with America 1.0 and there was a quite a bit of a

Discussion you know on the platform that you laid out we didn't see immigration there at the top is there a reason that you didn't put immigration in your formulation of America first 2.0 you talked about woke ism

Because I understand that yeah immigration's in there and I chose to do something that most candidates don't do is I launched my campaign both on television and with a simultaneously published op-ed in the Wall Street Journal laying about I think the most specific campaign launch that at least in modern

History of candidates launched with immigration was on there I believe in merit in immigration so I meritocratic immigration is the cornerstone for me I divide this in terms of accidental immigration versus

What about overall levels over vague are we were talking about so the Jared Kushner plan so sorry so go ahead yeah wrong discussion right so I'm not rejecting your premise because other people talk about this too but look I think that we should ask ourselves

What are the right kinds of immigrants we want right now we're getting the wrong kinds of immigrants people who's enter who's first act of entering this country is a law breaking one should

not be permitted to enter this country I say that unapologetically as the

kid of immigrants. I'm not a hardliner on that I believe in using the military to secure the southern border if necessary, rather than protecting somebody else's border abroad this is a higher priority here.

However, and by the way, even in the legal immigration system we have this harebrained idea of a lottery based immigration.

Who on earth would want America to pursue a lottery when you could just pick the best ones instead right best ones as defined by loyalty to this country by willingness to make contributions to this country on the basis of economic and otherwise career based track record to predict who's going to make the

biggest contributions in this country. So I think merit based immigration ought to be the right answer and so these people who want to get this into discussion about this many immigrants are not. There's two problems with that one is let's say you just pick level X whatever that number is. It may be that there are not enough immigrants who even meet that bar why should we let that many immigrants in.

Conversely, if we have immigrants who are really willing to serve this country as citizens make contributions assimilate be part of America and be proud of it even more proud than people who actually inherit their status as American citizens.

Great. Let's have more of them. But that's so far from where we are today. The problem today is that we actually have an accidental immigration policy starting with a disastrous illegal immigration influx starting at the southern border.

So I just want to go back to the straw man that that otherwise exists in this numerical debate that some people like to understand.

But what was wrong with America first 1.0. Why is nothing was wrong with America first one but I wouldn't borrow the lingo America first if I thought something was wrong with it.

I just think we need to take it to the next level.

So but then to follow up on that right. President Trump is in the race he was in the race whenever you announce your candidacy 2.0 is going to be juxtaposed then with 1.0.

So why is 2.0 then better than 1.0. The original version is on the ticket right now.

A couple of things here so I can get specific on the policies. I think I'm willing to do certain things that President Trump if he was going to do them would have done them already.

Right eliminating affirmative action is the easiest example because that can be done by executive order but that's small ball.

OK compared small not small ball but small picture compared to the deeper answer to your question. I think in order to put America first we need to rediscover what America is.

OK. I care a lot about national unity and I know President Trump he's a friend. He he's misunderstood on us. He cares about national unity too.

I know he does but he I don't think is capable in the same way of delivering it because if he was we wouldn't be where we are right now.

And so to me I think the thing that I care about many of your listeners care about many conservatives in this country care about what Donald Trump cares about is having not a national divorce.

And one of the things about this conversation about a national divorce is the more you talk about it

the more it speaks itself into existence.

I care about having one nation left at the end of it. E pluribus unum from many one that is the vision that set this nation into motion 250 years ago. And I think we need a leader who is capable of actually delivering on that both by going further than

Donald Trump ever did on questions from affirmative action to dismantling this climate religion that shackles the United States without shackling China that's going further on putting America first. That's your question has a clear north star on on the ideals that set American motion and speak to that with national unity as an express objective on the other side of it.

There is a contradiction here. You're talking about national unity but you say something like climate religion is basically flips the burden half the country. How do you get national unity through polarity. I disagree with you on that premise actually respectfully disagree with you.

Of course. I think that most people in this country agree with everything I've said so far. Okay that there is a climate religion that shackles the United States without laying a finger on China that the United States should be producing more fossil

fuels and it's completely hypocritical to tell companies like Exxon and Chevron that they can't to only ship that oil production to places like Petro China in China.

Last time I checked it was global climate change. And even if you subscribe to the tenets of this religion methane leakage is far worse over there than it is here and methane is 80 times worse for global warming even than a unit of carbon dioxide.

So a lot of this is a farce. I mean even the ESG movements and the climate movements hostility to nuclear energy befuddles the mad belies reality because even if you cared about carbon production or carbon emissions you would be embracing nuclear energy production.

I think a lot of people see through that hypocrisy. A lot of people understand that as I've joked around this has about as much to do with the climate as the Spanish Inquisition had to do with Christ.

Okay so you're not flipping the bird on Christians by saying that you actually oppose the Spanish Inquisition at the height of the height of in civil in the 15th century.

I think the same thing is true in America today people recognize that these religious movements aren't even about the gods that they propose to care about from racial equality to the climate. They've really become vehicles for aggregating power for the people who wield these magic words as a way of exercising dominion and control and even punishment self punishment on the back of it. And I think that goes for the racial equity agenda to climate change in a way that by the way the calls I've gotten I've been surprised even from Democrat friends or otherwise after they watch my opening video and you know well I've been one week on the campaign trail

but saying that you know what I'm afraid to say this to my friends but actually a lot of them like what you're saying. What did I say in my opening video I don't care if you're black or white or Democrat or Republican.

If you're on board with these basic principles these basic rules of the road.

Then we're on the same team and we can disagree on whether ivermectin treats covid or whether corporate tax rates should be higher low. But if we're on board with the unapologetic pursuit of excellence of free speech and open debate of self governance over aristocracy of recognizing that China is indeed our number one long run threatened that it's worth making some sacrifices to address that.

That's what it means to be American today and that's a pro American movement that transcends these I would say somewhat boring even stop a foreign partisan boundaries that we've somehow become a prisoner of in part because a modern media and a bunch of other reasons.

Sure. So we've got we've got less than five minutes left so sorry I will be quick about these ones so you had an interesting interview with Hugh Hewitt earlier in the week you didn't know what the nuclear tribe meant.

Brad was we'll put that to the side you can learn what that term means I know you know what it is now. That said I think the significance behind the question though is the president is in charge of the means to end the earth.

You can definitely train to learn what acronyms mean. I'm not convinced that you could learn any year and a half during partisan Fox News hits podcasts like this how to like actually sit down with Xi Jinping or Vladimir Putin convinced me otherwise because I got your point about how I could be And thank you for taking the the superficiality out of it because you know anyone can learn a term right so this is a word okay I understand that there's layer land air and see but but I'm approaching this with humility so I think I think one of

things that's different is yes I'm a fast study yes have I taken on other complicated problems before and learn them fast sure but I got approached this and I am approaching this with humility so I'll just tell you where I came from earlier

today I was having lunch upstairs in my house I'm in the basement now with a former cabinet level secretary from the Trump administration who was over here visiting me we spent two hours training on on the relevant issues.

I have to be precise I think precise what does training mean just trained because that is what was again let me tell you a quick story Berlin 1961 incredibly important JFK he's in the presidency he meets in Vienna with Khrushchev he looks like a full

in front of Khrushchev because JFK is a very smart guy but he was like kind of not really ready for it Khrushchev builds the Berlin Wall Cuban Missile Crisis. That is the definition of an example of how in the presidency. There was no training for that the JFK could have done

totally in 1959 1960. So what does training mean in that context for you is at least understand the history and the status quo but you can't we have to analyze a future situation you can never do it by analogizing as a substitute

one of the things that we're going to do that's different on this campaign and I haven't talked about this I'll mention this to you guys is we're going to take that we're going to do it daily we got two hours at least daily where there's somebody coming in flying here

spending time with me in Columbus Ohio we're going to actually let the world watch how I learn. Okay, nobody and by the way, many of the governors who are running they're utterly unprepared on foreign policy as well.

It's their fault just not the nature of what it means to be a governor. So nobody is really prepared for this job is important. Yep. I would not debate that you being incredibly educated and smart may know more information at the end of this campaign than a governor

does. But the issue of George W. Bush wasn't that he didn't know enough facts is that when 9 11 happened he had terrible judgment. He had terrible judgment. He was emotionally immature. He wasn't intellectually suited for the job he was foisted upon.

I'm just concerned if we reduce this to an SAT quiz. That's playing to your strengths. It shouldn't be

playing to the actual job. Yeah, there's difference between being smart and being wise and you know what, in the nature of this conversation, there's nothing I can say that would convince you or should convince you of the answer to your question right. But I think that what you want is somebody who approaches it with humility. This is a long process for a reason. I think the early states in Iowa and New Hampshire play a really important role here where people actually, I spent a little bit of time there

last because really impressed. I mean people have a sixth sense for who is real. Who's not what to ask. I mean the questions and the exchange is the parts that they were picking up on. We have an all right process. It's not a perfect process.

We have an all right process for vetting who gets to run the free world. I'm entering this ring pretty early to go through that. People should be skeptical of me or anybody else. But maybe especially somebody who's young who's ever held political office who has the hubris to think he can run for president of the

United States. And you know what, we will leave that to the voters next year. I think that this year should be about defining the agenda. So for a second my ask to you and everyone watching this is forget the question about the hoop in the primary for a little bit.

Let's first define the what and the why. What do we stand for? Why do we stand for? I think that's what's missing in the Republican Party. I expect, you know, bluntly, I'm not trying to be humble here as you can tell.

I think I have already this last week and will continue to lead the way in specifically defining an agenda and offering specific policy solutions. I invite the other candidates to join me. That's what this year should be about.

Next year should be about the question of the hoop. Okay, and I will be very transparent and open about this. People have a chance to watch how I learn. I will approach this with humility. And you're right. There's a temperament question to this too is not just about who has the right ideas.

Though I think this year's emphasis should be on that. But next year, let the voters decide who they think that right standard bearer is going to be. And I hope that I'll learn the trust of the people who vote for me.

I have faith in the Democratic process as well. So last two questions. I know you got to get out of here. Number one on the election of 2020. Was it stolen or not? Yes or no question?

Yes, but not in the way that not in the way that you mean that question. Okay, so what do you mean by that?

I think I think the technology companies tilted the scales of public debate. Okay, I think that this was I think the Hunter Biden laptop story epitomizes what was wrong with the lead up to that election cycle.

Okay, there was a true story that was censored in the name of misinformation actually created more misinformation that somehow this was Russian disinformation.

Guess what this was American disinformation that that actually wasn't a true story. By the way, the same lesson we've learned this last week as it relates to the COVID lab leak.

And so I think that and I think the 26 I think the real if I had to pick one election that was stolen from Trump, though, it was actually the 2016 election, the one that he won, not the one that he lost because he had to actually deal with two years of a fraudulently based inquiry that was based on completely

false and politicized premises. But I also think that we should stop using these retroactive we're not going to move forward by adjudicating the past. We're going to have to understand going forward. How are we going to fix the democratic process and it's not just about the ballots we cast every November. It's about a democratic culture of free speech and open debate.

And I think the litmus test for the health of a democratic process is actually the percentage of people who feel free to say and are free to say what they actually think in public.

I think over the last eight years we've done poorly in that regard. I think we have an opportunity to do better such that the 2024 election can put that dirty past behind us.

No disagreement on much of what you said, but I do have to get specific because it's an important thing. I'm talking about mass voter fraud. There was no mass voter fraud in the 2020 election.

I have not seen any evidence of mass voter fraud. I distinguished that from micro examples that have clearly been reported and documented. I have not seen evidence of mass voter fraud.

Great. And final question here is on abortion. So one of the vice president Pence and big disagreement between him and President Trump is on a national abortion ban. Where do you stand on national abortion ban?

So I am pro life. However, I think that for years on constitutional grounds, we have correctly argued that this is a state's issue. And I think it should remain a state issue.

I think overturning row in the Dobs decision. I think it was the right decision on hard constitutional grounds. Full stop. I'm hardline on that crystal clear. I think that we constitutionally finally got it right.

That's where I'm at for years. It was argued to be a states rights issue and both for constitutional as well as public policy reasons. I think that's where it should rest.

So would you sign any federal abortion legislation, 15 week ban, 22 week ban as proposed in the Congress?

As somebody who is staunchly pro life and unapologetic about that fact, I think that the states should get to that answer.

That's my answer.

All right. Well, Vivek Ramasthami, we really appreciate you taking the time to join us. We know that you took some time out of the schedule. I look forward to some of the videos that you're talking about, the two hour videos, the education sessions, and you're welcome back on the show anytime. Thanks very much.

Appreciate it, guys.

Absolutely.

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 and subscribe to our \$5 a month, \$50 a year or \$500 for a lifetime membership.

Thanks. See you all next time.