

[Transcript] All-In with Chamath, Jason, Sacks & Friedberg / E145: Presidential Candidate Chris Christie in conversation with the Besties

All right, everybody, welcome back to the all-in podcast. We're very excited today to do our third deep dive long-form discussion with presidential candidates for the 2024 election. Started with RFK and he got a huge boost in the ratings after it was on the pod. We had Vivek and now Governor Chris Christie is with us. Governor, thanks for coming.

My pleasure. Thanks for having me, guys.

All right, so it's a little bit different here than I think some of the other news hits that you do. This is not short form. It's long form. We like to, you know, have a thoughtful discussion with the candidates, not with talking points. And I know that you're a straight shooter, so I think you'll fit right in here with the other boys. I think you're very unique amongst candidates that you've actually brought up the deficit. As we know, just two facts here and then I'll hand it over to Freiburg for his question. Last two administrations have run up the deficit massively. Here's a chart of our debt. Trump added almost \$8 trillion. Biden's added \$4 trillion. And this is obviously an unpopular issue to bring up. As you've mentioned, bringing this up is unpopular. It doesn't get you votes necessarily to say we have to cut spending. And Freiburg and I are very much, I'll speak for myself, this is my number one issue in terms of picking a candidate. Freiburg, I think you said it's your number one issue. So Freiburg, I'll hand it over to you in terms of a question for Governor Christy.

Yeah, Governor Christy, nice to see you. You and I sang on a karaoke stage together in Idaho a few years ago, but it's nice to see you. I do remember that. Yeah. Is that a sly way of saying Idaho? I had to put that two and two together there. Oh, nice, Freiburg. It was a small bar in Idaho. Oh, wow. It was a small bar in Idaho. Small bar in Idaho. Small gathering. The establishment classes. Small gathering with a few folks who happen to be in a bar together. At the B conference that you all have been named.

We watched the Republican primary debate a few weeks ago, and I think what struck me at least was how little focus and attention is given on the fiscal situation, the U.S. government deficit in excess of \$2 trillion this year, debt to GDP in excess of 130%. 30 plus percent of U.S. debt is coming due in the next year, which means it's going to get refinanced at the higher rates at probably 5.5% plus. And then when you look at the demands on social security, Medicare forecasts are that both of those systems necessarily go bankrupt unless there's some extraordinary measures taken. And that seems to be a very kind of hot topic, golden goose that can't be touched or debated. All of this seems to be largely ignored, and so much of the conversation is around social issues in the United States, military issues, war, et cetera, when fundamentally there's no gas in the tank. I guess the point of view I'd love to hear from you is how do you think about that? Does that matter to you right now? Or do we think that this is a can that we kick down the road and we'll solve this problem later? We'll grow our way out of it. If we cut some spending, it'll fix itself. It seems so core to me that the future of the United States is going to be dependent on how we're going to manage this fiscal emergency that we're facing. Well, look, David, it's core to me too. And I'm, you know, if you've seen any of the excerpts from any of the town hall meetings I've done so far, you know, I've been talking about both the issues you just raised.

First off, I think on the deficit and debt side,

I learned about this after becoming a prosecutor and having to come to New Jersey

and inherit two problems immediately. We had a \$2 billion short-term deficit for the last five months of the fiscal year that I inherited. And then we had a \$11 billion deficit on a \$29 billion budget for the fiscal year starting July 1 of 2010. And I had to deal with those things. And as you know, unlike the chart that was just shown, you don't get to run it up. You have to square it. And so, you know, I learned how hard it is and how ugly it's going to be for your popularity to do these things. So on the first piece, on the \$2 billion, we sat down, I refused to raise taxes and we sat down and we eliminated 683 individual programs completely and then swept

every surplus from a school board in the state. And the way we did that was we reduced their state aid by the amount they had in surplus to get the \$2 billion in balance. And then extended that into the next budget cycle, kept all those cuts in place, which did some structural, you know, refiguring of the deficit, and then made additional cuts after that. You know, I got elected with 48.5% of the vote. And after I did that, my approval ratings went down below 40 in my first six months. But what I knew was it was absolutely necessary because in our state, we were already overtaxed and the idea of raising taxes again was not an option that was to me viable. So when you learn and you go through that process and then you look at what we're dealing with federally, I think you realize three things right off the bat. One, it is an imperative that we need to reduce spending. What it's doing to inflation and a long-term ability of the country to grow, it makes it absolutely necessary. Two, to me, kicking the can down the road is not an option because the problem is only going to get worse. And it's going to begin to impact our ability to be able to do some of the core things that government is supposed to do.

And then third, that you've got to be willing to sacrifice popularity for results. And, you know, I'm not going to sit here and say it'll be fun to do. It won't be. But I went through it once already on a smaller scale. And quite frankly, you have a much longer runway to do it at the federal level than I did at the state level. And I had no hard deadlines of, you know, June 30, 2010, and July 1, 2010 to accomplish both. On the entitlement side, I think I'm the only person who's been talking about this and saying out loud, we've got to consider raising retirement age and we've got to consider means testing and eligibility for social security. And, you know, those also, you know, I remember watching Biden's state of union address. And to me, the most disgusting part of it was when he said, can we all agree, we're not going to touch social security. And both sides stood up and cheered. Yeah, I agree. That was the, that was the worst moment for me as well.

Liars and hypocrites, like they all know it's going broke in 11 years. And that's an automatic 24% benefit cut on the social security side and automatic 25% Medicare benefit cut on that side. So you're not going to be, you're not going to be able to let that happen. And so you got to deal with those issues. And I think you can deal with them through both eligibility issues regarding means testing. And you can deal with it by also dealing with retirement age. Retirement age, I would do it over the longer term, not for people in their 50s and 60s currently, but for people in their 40s and below. And let me just say one follow up, because to your point, I think the recent polling showed something like 83% plus of Americans support the benefit they get from these two programs, Social Security and Medicare, that it should not be touched, that that is the popular opinion, that is what the voters are saying. Do you not think that you put yourself at risk in your campaign by making these statements?

And how do you get elected and instigate change? I put myself at risk by running, let alone put myself at risk. I just think you have to be honest with people. It's 11 years, it's not 20 years, it's 11 now. And it means that if the next president doesn't deal with it, then it is going to be in absolute crisis mode when it has to be dealt with.

We'll be inside three years. And at that point, the options will be even fewer.

So yeah, of course it's, and I know someone will run a commercial.

By the way, is that the part, is that the behind closed door conversation? Is that what's going on is the folks that you know that you talk with, everyone behind the closed door when they're not in front of the camera are saying we are going to have to deal with this in the next presidential administration? Yeah, yeah, but, but the, but they all say I can't believe you're saying it out loud. Right. But you know, to me, we are in such a bad place in politics in this country. If we don't start telling the people the truth about the problems we have, we're never going to have an opportunity to solve them. And that's, that's risky, but my entire candidacy is risky. So, you know, you might as well just go for it and tell people what you really think. And I do think there are a number of people out there who are thinking people. I think most people who answer that 83% number, you know, David is our people who don't even know that we're 11

years away from insolvency, because nobody talks about that part. And, and if you don't talk about that part, why would any of them want social security touched? But I'm finding in my town hall meetings, when I tell people it's 11 years from insolvency, how would you deal with a 25% cut, 24% cut in your social security benefit? People older folks in particular look horrified.

And so, you know, I think it's an educational process. And I've always tried to treat politics at least in part that way. That, you know, you know, something I say in New Jersey all the time when press would ask me about a poll that didn't like a position I was taking on an issue. I'd say, you know, a leader's job is not to follow polls, it's to change them. And, and my job is to change them. And to persuade and convince through facts and argument that this is the right way to go. And sometimes you'll win and sometimes you won't. But if you don't tackle the problems, what the hell are you doing there? You know, the housing behind you is nice. But, you know, frankly, it's not worth it to me if I'm going to go there and just be another one to kick this can down the road as, you know, Obama, Trump and Biden have all done. Bush tried to do something about it. And the Congress rejected it. But Obama, you know, Trump and Biden have done nothing. What are your top two areas where you would cut in order to save entitlements? What are the other areas where you would go to find savings? Well, look, I think, I think we, we have to look at social spending in general. That's really drastically increased post COVID. And those increases have not been taken back. So I think you have to look at all the programs that were ramped up during COVID and say, okay, what's it going to be to bring it back to pre COVID spending to start? And then after you do that, a further evaluation of those programs to see if they're effective. And I think that would get you a good part of the way there, given how much spending increased during COVID. I think secondly, we need to look at the way we fund education in this country as well. And whether or not when we're spending \$800 billion, what do we do with the \$80 billion the federal government spends? Another place, an interesting place to look. Small in comparison to a \$2 trillion debt, I understand. But that's another place I would look. And the only place I really wouldn't look is on the military side at this point,

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because I think you've got to increase efficiency and effectiveness at the Pentagon. But on the other hand, I don't think that this is the time to be cutting back there when our Navy and Air Force are both in the conditions they're in. This is a good segue with the military. Obviously, one of the major differences in thinking on this pod and a big debate inside the Republican Party is around, should we defend Ukraine

and then eventually, will we defend Taiwan? And so maybe I'll hand it off to David.

I'm stunned that this is coming up on your pod.

Yeah. It's a point of contention. I won't speak for sacks.

Have you ever heard of a pod before, Governor?

Yes, sir. And as does my oldest son listen to it. So in times when I miss, my son, Andrew, and he wanted to give me a full briefing before I was going to go on the pod today, and his evaluation of all of you, I told him I was going to refrain from that, because I didn't want to bring his biases into the interview.

Can you at least tell us what his evaluations were?

Well, afterwards, I will. Absolutely. Well, okay.

By the way, our path to presidential candidates is through the suns, it seems.

It's kind of a comment. Yeah, it's actually RFK's sons, very big into the pod.

David, of course, is a pacifist. He's a longtime GOP member, but doesn't believe we should be fighting never-ending wars. Let me go back. Yeah, let me level set here on foreign policy first before we get into Ukraine. I want to go back to the Bush era, forever wars, the Iraq war. One of the reasons why Trump, I think, really took off in 2016 is he was the first Republican to really come out and say that the Iraq war and all these Middle Eastern, forever wars we got into is a big mistake. Even though he was even though he was for it when we did it.

Okay, well, fair enough, but he said on the campaign trail, and hold on, let me finish the question. In 2016, he said that Bush lied us into the war, and he said, no more Bushes. Putting aside Trump for a second, we can get to Trump. What is your view on it? Do you fundamentally agree with that, that we were lied into the Iraq war? Do you defend it?

No, I think that I think that most people would admit that we were misled. I wouldn't use the word lied. I would say misled into the Iraq war because of the WMD issue. I mean, I supported the Iraq war because of WMD, and I thought if Saddam Hussein had WMD, that that was something that we had to deal with in the context of the post-911 world. When it turned out that he didn't have WMD, I don't think there would have been many people who would have been supportive of the Iraq war absent WMD. So I thought Trump's statements in 2016 were typical for him.

He changed his opinion, and instead of giving a rational reason for it, he gave a sophomoric one, and so I don't give him a whole lot of credit for that, but.

Well, you did at the time in a sense. I mean, when Bush said, sorry, Trump said that Bush lied us in the Iraq war at the South Carolina debate. That was on February 13th. You endorsed him on February 26th. Yeah. So what's that mean? Well, I mean, if you thought his answer was sophomoric, why'd you endorse him two weeks later? I endorsed him because I was convinced he was going to be the Republican nominee for president, and I didn't want Hillary Clinton

to be the president. And so having been in that race, competed with him after he won South Carolina, convinced he was going to be the nominee, and having at that time had a 15-year relationship with him. My view was I could go in there and try to make him a better candidate, and if he wanted a better president. And that's why I endorsed him. Absolutely nothing to do with his sophomoric answer on that. I didn't like his answer on the wall either, saying Mexico was going to pay for it. I thought that was sophomoric as well. But you know what? In American politics, you don't get to all vote for the candidate you want to vote for. You get to vote for the ones who are left. And if I had my first choice in 2016, it would have been me. But that didn't work out. So I defaulted into Trump because I thought he was a better choice than Hillary Clinton. And by the way, I still do think he was a better choice than Hillary Clinton. But you probably agree with that, right, Sax? You thought Trump would be a better choice than Hillary Clinton. I mean, honestly, back in 2016, I wasn't sure what to make at Trump because he was such a, you know, outsider and sort of a wrecking ball. I agree with him about the Iraq war. But I can accept the governor's answer that we were misled on that war. And if we had known the truth about it, we never would have gotten into it. So I think we can all agree on that. I want to get to Ukraine, but just quickly, 2012, do you regret not running in 2012? There's a lot of commentators who say that you kind of were the Trump before Trump. You had this combative style, this kind of take no prisoner sort of attitude. And you kind of had a moment in 2012 where it looked like maybe you could have been the front runner or the candidate. I guess why didn't you go for it in 2012? And I mean, do you regret that at all? I don't regret it. And I wasn't ready to be president. And that's why I didn't run. I know it seems quaint now after Barack Obama and Donald Trump have been president. But, you know, back in 2012, I really felt like it was necessary to feel in your heart and your mind you were ready. When people started talking about me running for president, I hadn't even been governor for a year. And before that, I'd been a prosecutor. And in my heart, I just, David, you know, it just didn't feel like I was ready to be president. And if I don't feel something in here, I'm not going to be very effective at making the argument politically. Nor am I going to be able to convince people to give me their money, which you need to do as well. And so no, I don't regret it. And by the way, you know, all those commentators who say that never ran for a goddamn thing in their lives. And, you know, they all can think, oh, you would have won. You would have beaten Romney and you would have beaten Obama. Maybe I would have, maybe I wouldn't have. But that's kind of like the dog catching the garbage truck. If you don't think you're ready and you catch it, the worst moment wouldn't have been losing that election. The worst moment might have been winning it and getting into the Oval Office for the first time and saying, oh my God, am I really ready to do this? So I don't have any regrets. I really don't. And everybody who usually, you know, commentates in that way are people who have never put their name on a ballot for anything. And until you do that, you don't know what it feels like and what it means to have to offer yourself up to people for anything, let alone for president. Yeah. Okay, fair enough. Going chronologically here, 2014, Biden is now Obama's vice president.

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He requests the Ukraine portfolio to run it for Obama. There's a famous phone call that gets leaked where our Deputy Secretary of State, Victoria Newland, is on tape picking the new government of Ukraine, which takes effect a few weeks later after the violent overthrow of the democratically elected Ukrainian government, the Yanukovich government. Three months after that, Hunter Biden is appointed to the board of Burisma. Do you believe that that appointment was made for

any other reason than Joe Biden was the de facto ruler of Ukraine?

I don't know about him being the de facto ruler of Ukraine.

I mean, he was the one. I don't think Joe Biden can be the de facto ruler of anything.

Well, no, let me clarify what I mean by that. On the Victoria Newland phone call, she says she needs to get approval from Biden and Jake Sullivan as National Security Advisor for this new Ukrainian government that she's picking. So she basically is saying that Biden is the boss. He's going to sign off on this. They apparently get the approval from Biden, and that government does go into effect after what appears to be a U.S.-backed who. So Biden clearly has enormous influence over that country.

Now, okay. Or Jake Sullivan.

Or Jake Sullivan. So look, it's too glib to say he's the ruler of the country, so I don't mean that. I just mean he's the ultimate authority, it seems like, in approving or picking this new government. Three months after he does that, Hunter Biden's appointed to the board of barisma. So my point to you is, what reason could there be for Hunter Biden's appointment other than Joe Biden's influence over that country? None.

There you have it. What else do you want me to say?

So a year later, so 2015. I don't know why Sax became a venture capitalist. He should have been a prosecutor. Absolutely. It's just incredible. I'm overwhelmed at the moment, as a former prosecutor. You can see he's sweaty. Oh my God,

Sax eyes you're on the ropes. Well, no, I'm just, I'm trying to get to the present day.

I agree. Sax flipped to page 13. Yeah, come on, Sax. No, no, no. I want to get, I want to get.

This is a four-hour podcast. Yeah, it feels like we're gonna go day by day over the last decade. And then Hunter Biden scored crack. I want to salvage common ground.

You were 14 years old on the middle school playground and you pushed that kid Bobby.

What were you thinking? No, I'm actually establishing common ground with the governor before I get into areas you might disagree. Okay, here we go. Excellent. Okay, so 2015, you have this prosecutor named Shokin, this Ukrainian prosecutor who is investigating barisma.

Joe Biden, according to his own acknowledgement on a videotape to, I think he was speaking to the council in foreign relations says that he gets Shokin fired and then magically the investigation into barisma stops. Do you think that was in furtherance of stopping corruption in Ukraine or was that an effort by Joe Biden to protect himself or his son from this investigation?

I think we're going to find out as continued congressional oversight occurs and the special council, I hope investigation broadens. So I'm not ready to say I know that for sure, but I'll tell you this much. There's enough smoke there that we got to see where the fire is. And I'd also say about Biden, I would never discount not as a substitute motivation, but perhaps as an additional one, the fact that he likes to pretend he's in charge of things.

But instead, his staff is really in charge. And that's how you get trained in the United States Senate. Your staff really runs everything, at least with many of the senators. And that's why it's such a bad training ground for the presidency in my view. But I digress myself. I'd say it is a likely motivation. It may not be the only one. And it's something I'm certainly intrigued to find out about as oversight moves forward. And I hope the special counsel's investigation broadens into the specifics of then Vice President Biden's involvement with his son's business dealings. Let's talk about that for a second. I guess the most recent revelation is that Joe Biden was communicating with his son under a pseudonym or a burner account. Was it Robert Peters? In your experience as a prosecutor, is there any legitimate reason why somebody would want to use a pseudonym for communicating with their son?

Look, burner accounts always raise my eyebrows, as a former prosecutor. But what I will say is that I would understand someone in public life if they're communicating with family wanting to do that in a way where it wouldn't be detected by folks who are prying in one way or the other. Whether that might be media, but more particularly hackers and other folks who are able to do things that I really don't have much understanding of, except to be fearful of them. So I don't want to say that is a de facto proof point, David. But again, going back to my seven years as a U.S. attorney, when I saw someone having

a burner phone or other types of burner accounts, definitely made me say, let's take a look a little more closely at that and see what we can find. So at a minimum, at a minimum, it's suspicious, for sure, and deserves inquiry.

Yeah, especially after Biden said he had no involvement with the son's business dealings. And we found out from Devin Archer's sworn testimony, who is Hunter Biden's partner, that Biden participated in 20 phone calls with clients to be the brand.

So it's too far down the Biden and Trump well, which will give us tons of, I think, material. Maybe we could get to Ukraine, which is Ukraine war. And who do you think's ultimately responsible for the invasion of Ukraine? Do you think the United States?

Obviously, the governor has said he supports Ukraine and he believes that it's responsible.

Yeah, so maybe just in terms of governor, do you think the United States is responsible for the invasion of Ukraine? Because we didn't do enough in terms of taking NATO off the table, like some people think. Or do you think Putin is responsible for invading Ukraine because he invaded Ukraine? I don't want to lead the witness.

You already did. But my answer is that Putin is responsible. Now, I do think, though, that United States inaction and bad signals sending to Putin, going all the way back to George W. Bush, who said, I looked into his eyes and saw his soul. Then to Barack Obama, who was completely uninterested in anything. And when Putin made moves on Ukraine under the Obama administration, he did nothing. To Donald Trump, who saw it as an opportunity to extort Vladimir Zelensky to get dirt on Joe Biden in return for military aid. To Joe Biden, who I think has been a hand wringer on this issue. And when he said, well, maybe a small invasion wouldn't be so bad. It reminds me of something I said to folks when I was a U.S. attorney. Everybody's definition of the word small is different. And you can't assume what they mean is the same thing you mean. So I do think there were American actions and inactions which contributed to sending signals to Putin that maybe we wouldn't care if he did it. But that's a small sliver in my view

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of the responsibility. The lion's share of the responsibility is in my view on Putin.

Fair enough. Would you admit Ukraine into NATO?

Well, I think in the situation we're in now, David,

it's almost a de facto point at this point. I think that given that we permitted Russia to do what they did, given that they have now executed what they've executed in terms of their aggression against Ukraine and the NATO support from a military hardware and intelligence perspective for Ukraine, I think it is now a foregone conclusion that Ukraine will be admitted to NATO.

And frankly, it's got to be now, I think, one of the penalties and one of the prices that Putin pays for his aggression.

But when would you do that? I mean, so Jens Stoltenberg at the Vilnius Summit made it explicit that Ukraine's future isn't NATO, but it could not happen unless and until they win this war.

Would you admit them sooner than that?

No. Okay. No, I would not. Because that would lead to World War III, obviously.

That's what I'm attempting to avoid. Yeah. Okay, fair enough. Would you have been willing to take NATO expansion off the table in 2021 in order to avoid a war? No, I think that was too late.

If you were going to take NATO expansion off of the table, if you were going to do it, it would have been done much earlier. Because if you did it then, that would essentially be giving into Putin's threat. And I think that would have sent an even worse signal than some of the signals that I mentioned before. So no, I wouldn't have been willing to do it in 2021 in order to avoid it. Because quite frankly, I don't believe that it would have avoided it.

It just would have forestalled it.

Do you believe that we made the correct decision? I mean, I know I'm going way back here, but in 2008 at the Bucharest Summit, we declared our intention to bring Ukraine and Georgia, for that matter, into NATO, but we didn't have a plan to do it.

Do you believe that was a mistake? I think it was a mistake not to, if you're going to do it, you should have a plan that lays out exactly how and when and why. And I think just expressing aspirational goals in that regard is dangerous in foreign policy in that regard.

And so I think the mistake was made not necessarily by ever having Ukraine and NATO, but by doing it the way it was done again, was in my view an unnecessary or at least not well thought out provocation. Is there anything about Joe Biden's policy in Ukraine that you would change?

Yeah, it would have been much more aggressive in providing military hardware much sooner than what he did. And I think he's been a hand wringer on it. Every step has been preceded by fretting and burrowing, furrowing brows and hand wringing. And I think if you're going to be in this, you have to give them the tools they need to win. When I met with Zelensky a month ago, he made it very clear to me he had no interest in American or Allied troops in Ukraine now or ever. He felt this was Ukraine's war to win or lose, but that they needed the military hardware necessary to compete in this war against Russia. And that my view of what their biggest concerns were, which the ones that I agree with, are the pace and amount of armaments that have been

given not only by the U.S. but by the rest of NATO allies as well.

I mean, for a lot of us, let me just ask a couple of quick follow-ups here and then we can move on.

I mean, for a lot of us, Biden has not been half-hearted about this. He saw it \$113 billion

appropriation. That seems like a ton of money that could have been spent domestically. What little hand wringing there was was on the giving of F-16s and Abrams tanks. And the reason for that, Biden said, was that it could lead to war three. I mean, are you not concerned about those kinds of escalations? I mean, isn't that a good thing to be concerned about, not dismissive about? It's always important to be concerned about it, but you have to be thoughtful about it and look at what the alternatives are. And to me, the alternative of allowing the combination of China and Russia to route Ukraine is something that's not in the U.S. vital interest and will lead to other problems as well with China going forward. And so, none of these are easy decisions, Dave, but what they are are the ones that you want someone who is thoughtful and has some experience making them as president. And I don't think Biden checks either of those boxes sufficiently. And I think his conduct has shown that. And by the way, the same applies to Trump. What do you think the resolution is here if in, I don't know, 16 months you're president or when you're president? How would you deal with this if the war is still raging here?

Well, I think it depends on what disposition the war is in at that point.

Jason, I think you have to evaluate how successful has Ukraine been in pushing back? They've made some success in the past couple of weeks in terms of breaking through some of the Soviet initial defensive lines. I think we have to see exactly how successful they've been. But what I would say is that there's no question that this is a conflict that we need to support and send a clear message, messages that have not been, as I said earlier, since it all clearly to Putin that, you know, this is a guy who has openly discussed the reassembling of the Soviet Union. And I have no, no illusions about the fact that this former KGBer thinks that the Soviet Union were the good old days. And if he thought he could get away with assembling as much of it as he possibly could, he would.

And I think that we have to send a very clear message on that to him and a very clear message on that to China regarding authoritarian expansionism. And this is where I think that the Trump, DeSantis, Rama Swami foreign policies are so hopelessly ill-informed and naive. The idea that we're going to go to Putin, who yesterday was sitting with Kim Jong-un and persuade him, the better place is to be with us. Go away from your Communist brothers in China and North Korea and come with us because it'll be a much better deal for you. And that Donald Trump is going to do that in 24 hours or Vivek Rama Swami is going to do it by virtue of his winning personality. I mean, to me, he looks like the guy you wanted to stuff in the locker in the 11th grade. But I don't think that's the guy who's going to persuade Vladimir Putin to leave the Communist Chinese and to, you know, come to come to the America side. But Governor, you have to admit the war is not going well for the Ukrainians. I mean, this counteroffensive, here's what we were promised. Remember, just several months ago, before the counteroffensive, you had people like Petraeus and Ben Hodges saying that the counteroffensive

would be like a blitz. They would rapidly penetrate the sort of beacon lines. They would march across the country to the Sea of Azov. They cut off the land bridge to Crimea. All this would happen within weeks, and it would be a significant Ukrainian victory. It has been almost a total failure. The Ukrainians have taken, even the Washington Post and Politico publications like that have said their losses have been staggering. The battlefield reports have been sobering. These are our top blob publications saying this. So we have been unsuccessful. Moreover, you say we

should give them more weapons, but we've run out. We've run out of the key type of ammunition in this war, which is artillery shells. That's why we're giving them cluster bombs. We got the cupboard is bare. So I'm just wondering how exactly would you turn this around, given that the Ukrainians are losing this war very badly? Well, first off, there was a lot in there. All right, let's go back to the predictions from Petraeus and others. You didn't hear me making those predictions because I think anybody who was briefed on the deficiency of armaments for Ukraine

would not have said something like that unless it was wishful thinking. Secondly, I understand the reports regarding our own deficiencies in providing them with more armaments. We have, I think, work to do with the rest of our allies in NATO in terms of their providing more of the artillery and other armaments that are needed by the Ukrainians. The Europeans have even less than

we do. I mean, you know. Well, but look, this is going to have to be something that we're going to have to cobble together together to get it done. And it also shows what I was saying earlier in regards to the budget question that, you know, this massive military buildup that Donald Trump says he did was baloney. I think you have an interesting point there, actually, which is, to me, one of the biggest surprises of this war is that we spend \$877 billion on the Pentagon and that we could run out of ammo. Right. So, I mean, without blaming Trump, per se, or Biden, I just think we're getting ripped off. I mean, the military industrial complex

is royally screwing the American taxpayer. How can we spend \$877 billion and not have ammo? Can you explain that to me? Or have food insecurity for a lot of members of the military, not have paid leave, not have health care. The idea that you don't want to look at that budget is an enormous- That's not what I said. That is what you said. No, it is not.

What did you say? No, no, I did not say that. What I said was that the Pentagon has to be made more efficient and more effective with what it spends, but not reduce what it spends.

And that goes right to the point that David just made, which is, you have to get answers as president to the questions of what are you spending \$877 billion on if we're running out of ammo and there's food insecurity and there's not paid leave, right? So, what I was saying through the answer I gave you on the budget was, I did not see that as a place to cut, but I did say very clearly that it's a place where we have to make the Pentagon more efficient and effective. And we need a secretary of defense and a president who want to demand answers to those questions first. Are you not sympathetic to the idea that efficiency sometimes means spending less to get the same or more? If that's the conclusion we come to after examining it, then I'm very sympathetic to that. So, then you are opening to cutting the defense budget.

I'm open. It is a secondary issue, the primary issue on defense. No, I understand. I just want to clear answer so I understand where you're coming from. You want to look at the defense budget. You have an intuition that there's potentially extreme levels of waste. And so, if you find that waste, will you just cut it or will you just reallocate it? Reallocate. Why? For the very reasons that Dave is just talking about. If we're running out of ammo, if our submarine capacity is not where it should be, which I believe it is not, if our ship capacity is not where I believe it should be and it is not, in my view. And if our modernization of our air force is not where it should be, which I believe it is not, then you reallocate that money. Okay, so there's a principle in capitalism called zero-base budgeting, which I actually like what you're saying. But just to

kind of double click on what that is, zero-base budgeting starts with the principle that you just started, which is what are our priorities? What do we want to accomplish? And then you go and systematically build up where the budget actually starts at zero dollars. Hey, Pentagon, you get zero, not 800 billion. What do we need to accomplish? Oh, we need bullets. Okay, we need armaments. Okay, we need to have food security for all of our armed servicemen and women, absolutely. And then what happens if that number gets to 350 billion? Do you just cut half a billion or do you find ways to spend the other half a trillion dollars? Well, I'm glad you brought that up because that's what I did as governor. I was the first governor who did zero-base budgeting and I did it, first governor in New Jersey to do it. And I did it because of the dire straits that we were in. I didn't think we could assume any longer anything in terms of our spending. So I absolutely would want to take that approach. Now, I don't think you're going to go from 877 billion to 350 billion and say that we've met all of our defense needs and the needs of our fighting men and women with that number. But let's just leave the number blank for a minute. If I concluded that we could do everything we needed to do through the re-engineering of how we were spending the Pentagon and that ultimately it would check the boxes I want to check in terms of some of the issues I just talked about. And it turned out to be less than 877 billion.

Of course, I would look not to spend 877 billion, but that assumes a lot of things in there as you know. But the principle of zero-base budgeting, from my perspective, worked when I was governor, not only in terms of keeping our spending at an increase of 2% a year annually for 8 years, but it also educated me much more on the intricacies of the budget as the ultimate decision maker. And I think that was useful. You're a very effective prosecutor and part of that is having a good intuition. So I'm just going to ask you your intuition. How much waste do you think is in the military industrial complex and that 877 billion? Do you think there's 30 cents of waste? Do you think there's 40 cents of waste? Do you think there's 5 cents of waste? Or do you think there's like 70 cents of waste? My intuition tells me that it is significant. I can't put a number on it. It'd be irresponsible for me to put a number on it. But there's no doubt that when you see us spending 877 billion and we don't have 155 millimeter artillery shells, that there's waste. Let's talk about governance and just like civil society and government for second. But let's just finish on this military industrial complex. Why is it? How does it come to be that so much corruption and graft gets introduced into the military budget? Explain just how it happens. How does all of this waste end up happening? Where on the one hand, you ask people, men and women, oftentimes poor, oftentimes minorities to come and serve and put their lives on the front lines. You don't even give them enough food. Somebody's clearly making money out

of the 877 billion. Just explain how that waste comes to be and the influence peddling and the revolving door just so that the average person can understand it.

Well, first off, and I'll answer your question specifically, but let me say by answering it this way, I don't want to imply in any way that this waste and corruption happens just in the military budget because it happens. It's been my experience. It happens across budgets, across disciplines. With that being said, I would say it happens in a number of different ways. First of all, not doing zero based budgeting contributes to that because people no longer have to rationalize or justify the existence of a program. They just need to hire enough lobbyists to keep it getting put in there. So that's one way that it happens. Secondly, incompetence in administration.

So people who are either purely incompetent in the job or, alternative two is, are corrupt in the job and so they look the other way on waste because they want to get a job through the revolving door you talked about on the other side. Third way that I think it happens is extraordinary events that cause political overreaction. So you'll have an extraordinary event that occurs from a national security perspective and then politicians want to look like we're responding to it. And the way we're responding to it is we're going to spend X tens, hundreds of billions more on this broad category of initiatives without really digging into whether that can be spent effectively that way or not. And then once it gets in there, for the reasons I gave to you in the two examples before, it doesn't get out. So you layer it over and layer it over and layer it over and layer it over. And then that's the way that stuff happens. So I think it's a bit of a nutshell presentation on that for you. But I think those are the three most important elements that I've observed personally in governing a state with 60,000 employees and a \$34 billion budget. You think the antidote to that is to start with zero-based budgeting or are there other more radical changes you would want to make, whether it's the CIA or the NSA? How do you think about getting to the root cause or root answer of the truth? Look, I think that there's two ways to do it initially and zero-based budgeting is one of them. And secondly, is to try to select competent people for those positions who understand clearly from the leader what their mission is. Would you, for example, be willing to do an EO that said, if you serve in these roles, you're banned from serving any of these folks for 20 years or something like that? Something that just makes it clear that there's no financial motivation for somebody to walk out the door and then go and work for Lockheed Martin? Just to augment that, let's talk about these former generals, like the ones we were quoting who predicted counter-offensivity, this wonderful success. They're all now on the boards of weapons manufacturers. So the people in the Pentagon who make a lot of these procurement decisions about weapons systems, when they retire, they go off to serve on these boards. I mean, the big weapons companies are basically their retirement program. I mean, that seems like a horrible set of incentives. I mean, would you do something like ban the revolving door between people working in the Pentagon and then working for a weapons company? Well, I certainly would be willing to consider if they worked with a particular contractor, they had supervisory or decision-making authority over a program run by a particular contractor not being able to go back out and work for that contractor. The problem is when they go back in, the problem is they know in advance that their retirement program is going to be working on one of these boards. So they're not as tough as they should be when they're actually in the government job. Tough problem. So you're talking about the revolving door in the way in or the way out? No, I'm talking about on the way out. Basically, you work your way up to general and then you retire and then you join the boards of these, Raytheon and Lockheed and all these guys. Well, I think that there are appropriate restrictions that can be put on in terms of number of years to make it go past the period when that person could have direct political influence on the administration that's in play. But I also think we need to be careful about the fact that we don't wind up throwing out the baby with the bathwater in the sense that there are some people who are legitimate people who are not looking to do it in a way that is

corrupt or unethical, but who develop great expertise in certain areas and that expertise can be very helpful. We're only looking at the negative side of it. So I think there are ways to do what we need to do with the political influence and that it would be to ban it for the rest of that administration. So if you serve in a particular administration, for the rest of that administration, you can't go back out and work on the issues that you were working on when you were there. That to me seems to be reasonable. I don't know whether 20 years make sense or not, but we've identified the problem. Now let's figure out how to fix it. I'm willing and open to do that, but I want to make sure I do it in a way that is not creating a whole different set of problems that we'll then be talking about. And the analogy I make in part on this is the wall between CIA and FBI and the problems that that I think precipitated regarding 9-11. So you know, there are fixes to these things. And I'm telling you guys is I'm willing to be open about how to do it. I favor the concept. I think we're negotiating over length of years and how it applies. Should that be the case for all government administrative jobs, Governor?

So FDA into healthcare, healthcare into FDA, USDA, should that be the case everywhere? It's the same principle, yeah. How should that then be applied to Congress people?

Well, since the EO won't cover members of Congress in the same way that that's why they don't have term limits, which I believe they should have, and why none of the stuff will ever apply to Congress. So let's tell the truth. It'll never apply to Congress because they'd have to pass it for it to apply. And it will never happen. But the president could do what he could do about his branch of government and should, and I would. Let's pivot to one of the most controversial topics between the two parties, which is immigration. And I'll pull up two charts here to queue up the

discussion. Here's the first chart. Just since 2000, we've been net migration in the United States just on a steady stream down at around 5 million. Second chart is border crossings. That orange line there that you're seeing, that's COVID. And then the blue line obviously is the return from COVID. But the border agency seems to think not much has changed over the last couple

of years at the border. However, we have, and that's across obviously multiple administrations. Other countries have point-based systems. They have very logical discussions over immigration. Is this person going to add and be a creative to the society? Is this person going to be a drain on society? And they just, UK, Australia, New Zealand, countless countries now use this point-based system. It's incredibly polarized here. And we have the lowest unemployment of our lifetime. Plenty of jobs. We still have 1.6 jobs per American who are looking for jobs.

I'm curious why you think this immigration discussion is so polarized and not factual and how you as president would resolve this issue and maybe make it make more sense to the American public? Well, look, I think the first thing, the first part of the question is how has it gotten so polarized? And I think it's because people in political life have used this as a weapon on both sides of the aisle to try to promote their own political agendas. Democrats have wanted this perception on their positive side from their perspective that they'll let anybody in because they think ultimately those folks who come in will be their voters ultimately over the long haul. And they also want to raise restrictions. They want to raise the issue of restrictions that are placed by Republicans on this to make us seem to be heartless, uncaring, unfeeling people. On our side, we want to make the entire system seem completely lawless

because that plays into our view of ourselves as the law and order party and the Democrats as the party who could give a damn about law and order. And we want to play into the populist side of it, which says that any person who comes over the border is likely to take your job, not just a job, your job. And then when you present it to people that way, they of course are going to be anti-immigration because they'd like to keep their job and support their family and have a life that they want to look forward to and for their kids as well. So that's my explanation on the first part as to how we got here.

Seems logical, yeah. And fair, by the way. Your assessment of both parties, by the way, on these topics I think is excellent.

And by the way, completely unfair way to have conducted this stuff. The problem has been that we haven't had presidential leadership on this issue since Reagan.

Reagan ultimately, and I think he learned this as a conservative governor in a blue state where he had to deal with Jesse Unra running his legislature. And Reagan was all front of mind because I just finished writing a book on Reagan. So it's fresh in mind to me.

Reagan learned that it was only he, the governor, who could force people into a room to get issues resolved. In the same way when he was president, he didn't love the deal he made on immigration. Same way he didn't love the deal he made on Social Security, but he liked it more than he liked the alternative of doing nothing.

I think the only way we're going to resolve the immigration issue, Jason, is to have a president, as I said in response to David Friedberg's earlier question on debt, a president who's willing to sacrifice some popularity to try to force a resolution.

And I do think that most Americans would support a merit-based immigration system.

Why does it never come up? I mean, these other countries have had such great success with it.

Why won't any politician say it? I haven't heard you say it in the debates. I don't know if you have. I haven't heard everything you've said. They didn't even ask us about immigration in the debates. They didn't ask us about immigration, entitlements, or the debt. Three things we've already talked about here today, but they had time to ask me about UFOs.

Yeah, that was pretty bizarre. They were like, hey, let's give you the most meaningless question of anybody in the debate. That's what the base wants to hear. Come on.

Yeah. Wrap it up for us, Governor. Let's talk about UFOs. I mean...

What did you think of the ending of secession, Governor?

Yeah, I mean, it's like... So I have talked about at my town hall meetings about Republicans should be advocating for a merit-based immigration system.

But we need to also recognize, wow, I think both parties should be in favor of a secure southern border. If for no other reason than the fentanyl and drug-related issues that are involved.

Why is there such a debate over the numbers? Because I just pulled up those numbers and that's the border patrol, and that's across multiple administrations. And then people are saying...

You're living in some kind of simulation, Jason. Do you see the Washington Post just last week?

The headline is, families crossing U.S. border illegally reached all time high in August.

This is the Washington Post.

Oh, you trust the Washington Post now?

I'm saying that if a liberal Democrat publication that serves the D.C. Blob is admitting this problem, why can't you admit it?

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I'm not saying that it's not at all-time highs, but it doesn't seem to have gotten much different than over the last two administrations.

You don't want to act like it's not a serious problem.

No, no, I don't actually.

And I promise you, I'm not worried about my job.

I brought it up at SACS.

I brought it up at SACS.

The United States can't absorb a million migrants a year.

I brought it up as my question. Obviously, I care about it.

So don't tell me I don't care about it.

I'm just fact-checking that asset.

It's fine to fact-check, but even though it's at all-time highs, if you look at that chart, it seems like there's a big debate on the numbers that, hey, maybe at all-time highs, but it's been relatively the same.

And so that's what I'm trying to get at, Governor.

Why can't we get good numbers on this?

Well, we do get good numbers on it, but everybody slices the numbers differently.

I used to work in a deli when I was in high school for a period of time.

And everybody had the same big chunk of baloney,

but depending on how you sliced it, it looked different.

And so I agree with David that it is a very serious problem right now.

And it's because of Biden's policies and his rhetoric.

He set a very clear signal during the 2020 campaign.

If I win, the border's open.

Let's go.

Everybody come on in.

And it has caused a crisis in a number of levels.

Also, Democratic politicians saying that they were willing to be sanctuary cities and sanctuary states.

Well, now I see the front page of the New York Post every day.

And here's Eric Adams complaining that he needs help.

He needs help.

Well, you should have shut up and not said you were a sanctuary city.

And then you wouldn't need the help.

But it's easy.

Did you see the video yesterday?

He said in all his time in New York, he's always seen an end to every problem.

There's always a solution.

He says, I have not seen.

I cannot see an end to this problem.

I don't see a solution.

Yeah.

Governor, you just broke Jason's heart.

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You were his perfect candidate till that answer.

You just broke his heart.

No, I didn't.

I'm in favor of the Point Bay system have been very consistent about that.

I think we should actually have a thoughtful discussion of how many people we can actually bring in and sustain.

Well, I think we all agree on merit-based.

We all agree on merit-based immigration.

The thing that I have an issue with, Jason, is just you pretend like the border's not in crisis.

It is in crisis.

Oh, I think it's not.

It hasn't been resolved for decades, right?

I mean, we have not had a solution there.

When's the last time the border was functional?

Well, Trump at least had to remain in Mexico policy and then Biden revoked it.

And now they're thinking about bringing it back because they have no way to control the huge number of people who are streaming across.

Yeah.

I'm just trying to advocate for a Point Bay system.

By the way, on the numbers, that's what should be part of a negotiation between Republicans and Democrats in Congress and the White House based upon the current circumstances.

We can't deal with all the stuff that's happened before.

But what we know now is we have current circumstances now, guys, which are not only impacting quality of life in terms of crime and quality of life in terms of education because you see what's going to happen in the New York school system. And, you know, you are going to have thousands of immigrant children who now are going to show up at the New York City public schools to be educated.

That's why the uncontrolled part of what David Sacks is talking about is so vital right now.

And thirdly, but most importantly to me, is the fentanyl issue.

Because when you have 110,000 people dying of overdoses last year in this country and you have overdosed being the number one killer of men between 18 and 34, it is a crisis. And it is a crisis which is not created entirely by the border, but is contributed to mightily by what's going on at the border.

Would you send, there's been talk of this, I think, from certain candidates, would you send troops into Mexico to take out the cartels or is that...

No, I would not. I would put National Guard at the border to work with Customs and Border Patrol to stop the fentanyl cartels from getting in to our country.

And I would use our intelligence community to do what we always do with enemies of that nature, which is to target them and to make sure that if they're going to do what they're going to do, that they're dealt with. But in terms of a Ron DeSantis full-scale invasion of Mexico, yeah, I think I'd probably demure on that one.

You'd whack these people, bring in the fentanyl and you just wouldn't do it on the soil in Mexico.

Correct. And also, and I'd whack them within the laws of the United States.

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It would not be a vigilante system where everybody goes down there and just starts popping somebody they think is a fentanyl dealer as they come over the border. But what I would also say to you is we've got to also make sure we deal with this diplomatically with the Mexicans. And by diplomatically, I mean, not like being nice through very hard negotiations with them to say to the Mexican president, like you are importing precursor chemicals from China into your country to make fentanyl with the sole purpose of profiting from and killing Americans. That's not something we're going to tolerate. So you wouldn't send furio? We got it. We do it the smart way, not the way that lets you pound your chest and pretend you're a television tough guy. Let me double-click on that since you brought up fentanyl. We have this crisis here in San Francisco, open-air drug market, cheapest fentanyl you can get. Plus, we give subsidies if you come here and you're a fentanyl addict. We pay for you to come here, essentially. It's absolute chaos. We keep getting promises in San Francisco that we're going to turn it around and we're going to take it seriously. It never happens. Given that, is there not a case for the feds coming in and cracking down on the fentanyl trade here? And if you were president, would you come in and assert the local authorities and just take out all these crazy, open-air drug markets in some cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco? I actually said that in a debate. What I would do would be to instruct the attorney general to instruct the U.S. attorneys in the cities with these kind of problems that we are taking over the prosecution of violent and drug crime in those cities. If the prosecutors on the state level are unwilling to do it, the U.S. attorneys have the laws on the federal books to do it. We have the rooms of the federal prisons and we will police these cities until they get their act together. I think you just got a couple million votes and people here are fed up with the locals. Governor, can I just push back on that? I recently started reading the federalist papers again. Saks, I don't know when you last reviewed them. And I'm just struck by how so much of our modern political rhetoric is driven by what the federal government will do for you on a national basis, a state basis, and now even a local basis. Is that really the role of the federal government or should each state and each city ultimately decide what the hell kind of city they want to build, what they want to live in and then deal with the consequences and let the federal government become responsible for the things that were defined in our constitution and that the constitutional republic was meant to set out to do for the federal government rather than use the federal government as a hammer to smash all nails everywhere. At some point, the hammer is going to break. So let me answer the question, which is no, it's not the role of the federal government to do it. Unless the discord and the inability of the states to deal with an issue begins to affect the entire country. And I believe that these, this failure, and it's by the way, it's a planned failure, David. This is the Soros group going around and electing these completely liberal prosecutors who say, no, I'm not going to prosecute these crimes anymore. It begins to affect the very nature of the entire country. If we don't have functional cities, David, we can't have a functional country. And so no, I would do this only because I think

by the time I get there in January of 25, we are going to be at last resort world. Now, if in the interim between now and January of 25, the discord in places like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago, New York, and others got so bad that the citizens there rose up and demanded something different. And the states and cities started to respond to it. I have no interest in doing this unless we are the law enforcers of last resort. And so philosophically, I completely agree with you. But we're now in a situation where when I was in New York City all day yesterday, it is the worst I've seen New York City since the late 70s. I agree. Yeah. And I was old enough then to go in. I was a high school student in the late 70s and go into the city and my parents used to be petrified. If I insisted on going into New York, go to a basketball game or a hockey game, the walk from the Port Authority bus terminal on 41st and eighth to Madison Square Garden on 33rd and eighth was a absolute youthful youthful education on drugs and porn and violent crime. But so I agree with you philosophically on that. But I think in the instance we're in right now, this is what we'd have to do in order to get it back under control. And so I'm not thrilled about it. But I think it's absolutely necessary. In the United States, we have somewhere between two and three million Americans incarcerated, one of the highest per capita incarceration rates of any country in the world. And a lot of this justice reform movement arose from what are considered to be very deep inequities in the imprisonment of American citizens for various petty crimes, misdemeanors that turn into felonies that turn into three strikes that turn into spending your life in prison. And that obviously there's a big racial divide in how this affects the population. And from that movement arose this effort to try and address the social inequities and how the prison system has become to some an extension or the follow on to America's torrid history with slavery. What is your point of view? Then do we have inequities in the prison system in how we address crime in this country? And if so, what would the right path have been? Looking back now at the efforts and the dollars that have gone into trying to solve this problem through decriminalization that has obviously led to massive problems in inner cities. Is it a problem, the criminalization in this country, the incarceration in this country? And if so, what's the right path to addressing it? And obviously you have an intimate history here, so you would know this better than most that we would talk to. Hey, look, I think it is a problem. And let me tell you what I did as governor. We did criminal justice reform in New Jersey. And we did it in a bipartisan way. And this is what we did. I thought that the biggest problem we had in New Jersey was our state constitution required. It was a shall issue state on bail. Everyone was entitled to bail under our constitution. And the only factor that could be taken into account constitutionally, David, was risk of flight. So if you had a rap sheet as long as my arm and your arm put together, that could not be considered by a judge in whether or not to grant bail or not, nor could the nature of the violence you committed in those acts. I saw that as an enormous problem. I agreed with Democrats that on a lot of these minor drug crimes, and I don't mean dealing crimes, I mean possession crimes with addicts being arrested for small amounts of possession, that we had become a debtor's prison in New Jersey, that if somebody couldn't afford the 500 bucks for the minimum bail, which was usually \$5,000, they spent more time in

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county and state prison than they ever would have spent if they had just pled guilty and been allowed to plead guilty and get sentenced. So the deal we made was this.

On certain defined nonviolent crimes, I would agree to the state law allowing release on people's own recognizance. In return, the Democrats would amend our constitution to make it a May issue state on bail and to add dangerousness to the community as a factor to be considered in granting bail or not. What's happened since then? Crime in New Jersey is down since we did this. We closed two state prisons and we have not had any spike in violent crime like you've seen in New York since then because we did it smartly and in a way that was balanced. And what you've also seen is 98% of the people released on the road for cognizance have shown back up for their court hearings. So we're not having some people running around and jumping the ROR release that they've gotten. And I took one of the two state prisons we closed and turned it into a drug treatment prison so that folks who had documented drug and alcohol addictions while in prison were able to go for the concluding parts of their term to this secondary prison to get, which is fully secure and they were detained, but they also got drug and alcohol treatment while they were in there. And what we've seen with that

is we've seen recidivism drop among those people who have gone through that program by nearly 40%. There are ways we can do this without having the results New York has had through their ridiculous criminal justice reform. We can do it the right way across the whole country.

Have you seen other states follow New Jersey's lead there or New Jersey's model?

I have seen a couple of other states that have done it. I don't think anybody's done it as well as we did it. And imagine this, a Republican governor got support from the PBA and the FOP for that reform. So from law enforcement professionals and got an A plus from the ACLU.

Now, when you can get both of those, it's kind of hard to get that done. And I think we've gotten it done. And we just had a, at my policy institute, we just had a seminar on this from people from the public defenders to criminal, private criminal defense lawyers, prosecutors, and cops all on a panel. And not one of them had an objection to criminal justice reform in New Jersey.

And this is now nearly 10 years after we did it. So I think there are ways to do this.

Unfortunately, a lot of people don't want to have a long form conversation on criminal justice reform. They want to have either the Joe Biden approach from when he was in the Senate, mandatory

minimums for everybody, throw everybody in the can, three strikes, you're out, all that stuff.

Or they want to have the George Soros conversation, you know, where nobody who commits a crime really

meant to do it. And all jail is unfair. Both of those are dead wrong.

Governor, you mentioned the FBI briefly before. One of the revelations that came out during the Twitter files is that we had 80 FBI agents monitoring American social media accounts and submitting takedown requests to Twitter. This is your pre Elon Twitter and presumably many other big tech companies, because I'm sure they weren't just doing this with Twitter. What business is it of the FBI to be monitoring and censoring Americans? Do you think there's any justification for that? What is your view of that? I think the only reason to monitor those

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kind of things would be for terrorist information. And I think that would be that would be reasonable to do. But I don't think for any other reason, other than terrorist activity, domestic or foreign, I think the FBI has a right to do that. And I think it's the right thing to do.

But I don't think under any other circumstances, David, they should be doing that.

Are you willing to say to Chris Ray, as I understand it, you recommended Chris Ray for the position many years ago. And I think you're a fan of his. Are you willing to say to him, knock this off? You should not be involved in censoring American social media accounts?

I'm willing to say to Chris exactly what I just said to you. And by the way, I've known Chris long enough. I mean, we were in the Bush Justice Department together, starting back at night, you know, right in the media post 9 11 period. So I've known Chris now for 22 years. I will say exactly what I think to Chris and will instruct him appropriately with the Attorney General. And let me just make a point, David, since you brought that up. I don't think presidents should be involved in the criminal investigatory activity of the Department of Justice in any way. And so you should set policies that say like that. You know, your work should be restricted on monitoring just domestic or international terrorism. But you shouldn't be commenting in any way on what they're doing from a criminal investigatory perspective. I think that started in the Obama years with Eric Holder. When you appoint your wingman Attorney General, I guess that's what happens. And the fact is that it's continued through the Trump years and now through the Biden years. And my instruction to my Attorney General be the same as it was, because in New Jersey, we don't elect Attorney General, we appoint them like you do in the federal system. And what I said to each of my attorneys general was, I know I was the US Attorney for seven years. I got expertise and opinions on criminal prosecution. I'm never going to call you ever. And I never did. Because once you decide to be a political figure and not a law enforcement figure, you should stay out of criminal investigations. So I know you didn't ask it, but it struck me when you were talking about that.

Governor, let me ask you one last question from my end, which is, why are you running for president? Recent polling data show the 52% unfavorable rating, 23% favorable, and you're a 3.5% in the average of the national polls. What's the goal here?

Help us understand how you think about the campaign and how you think about your future as a political operator and what your goal is with the campaign.

My goal is to be president of the United States. And since I've been doing this for a while, I don't pay attention to national polls because we don't have a national primary. And in fact, we don't have a national general election.

What we have is 50 individual state elections. That's the way we nominate candidates. And if you look at the most recent poll in New Hampshire, I'm in second place in New Hampshire at 14%. Ahead of Ron DeSantis, ahead of Vivek, ahead of Nikki, ahead of Pence, and behind only Trump. And now I'm behind by 20 points. I'll give you that. But I'm behind a guy who's only at 34% in that poll. And so I absolutely believe I can win New Hampshire. And I believe if I win New Hampshire, David, then the whole race changes.

You have a line there. Yeah. Yeah.

Right. So, so let's start off with I'm running because I want to be president of the United States. Yeah.

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And that's the only reason to run. I think I don't need to run to become famous.
I'm famous enough. I don't need to run to, I don't need to run to get a book deal.
Because you know what? I've already written two books and my third one's getting ready to come out.
I don't need it to get a job on TV. I gave that up to run for president.
So I'm running for president to be president, David.
Cover it.
And, and, and that's why I'm doing it. And for no other reason.
Should Donald Trump be in jail?
We'll find out when these trials happen.
What do you think?
I'm willing to give everybody the presumption of innocence because that's what the Constitution demands that I do.
Do I think?
What's your prosecutorial intuition?
I would have indicted both federal cases.
I would not have indicted the New York case or the Atlanta case as to Donald Trump.
I think on the New York case, the Manhattan DA has much more important work to be doing than bringing a case on a seven-year-old payment to a porn star that he was having an affair with to keep it from the American people.
After the American people already know everything they need to know about it.
So I think that was useless and purely political.
In the Atlanta case, once Jack Smith indicted Trump on election interference federally,
I know that Fannie Willis was probably very upset that she had been investigating it for two and a half years and he beat her to the punch.
But he beat her to the punch.
And there's no reason to indict somebody for the same acts twice.
And so I wouldn't have indicted him in Atlanta.
I would have indicted him for sure on the documents case.
But I will tell you, since you asked,
I wouldn't have indicted him on the documents.
I would have just indicted him on the obstruction of justice and the lying.
I think by inditing on the documents, you just made it a much more complicated case that may not get to trial for a year and a half or two because of the classified documents involved.
And I would have indicted him on the January 6th case because I believe his activity from election night forward is worthy of the probable cause standard.

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Now we'll see if the government can prove it beyond a reasonable doubt on both those cases.

I will tell you.

But on those cases that you would bring, that you would indict as a prosecutor, what sentence would you seek?

Because these Democrat prosecutors are seeking over 500 years of jail time for Trump.

I mean, what do you think the appropriate punishments to seek is?

David, that's just the statutory number.

It's not whatever is done.

People do that all the time.

They look at the statutory maximum, they add up each count in the statutory maximum, and they come up to 500.

It never happens.

And it's never asked for.

That's the only thing you saw though, yeah.

And it's never asked for.

What you do is you look-

If you were the prosecutor, what punishment would you be seeking?

I don't think that it makes any sense.

For Donald Trump to go to jail.

And it's not just because he's Donald Trump.

It has more to do quite frankly with the fact that he'd probably be 79 years old before he'd be ready to go to jail.

And when I was prosecuting cases, I really felt like when you get to that age and you send someone into the atmosphere that federal prison is, even the minimum security federal prison, that you're essentially giving them a death sentence.

And unless they've done something, like Bernie Madoff for instance, which is worthy of a death sentence, then I would not think that sending him to jail would be appropriate.

Now, a judge may feel differently.

And in the end,

all the prosecutor does is make a recommendation.

The judge makes a decision.

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If I were President of the United States,
while I would not consider pardoning Donald Trump
if he were convicted,
unless the trial for some reason
showed itself to have unconstitutionally unfair elements
that were not corrected by the courts,
other than that, I wouldn't pardon him.
But if he were sentenced to jail,
I certainly would consider commuting the sentence
for the reasons I just said.
Let's talk about what happened on January 6th for a second.
A lot of folks in the Republican Party
are framing it as like a day out at the park.
And we just saw Trump appointed judges,
give the oath keepers,
and the proud boys, sentences,
multi-decade sentences for seditious conspiracy.
Do you think these sentences
that have been handed down by Trump appointed judges
are part of a deep state conspiracy
against the Republicans?
Or do you think these people are domestic terrorists
and that they got appropriate sentences?
You know, I don't want to,
Jason, give an answer on each one of the cases
because I quite frankly could tell you
that I haven't followed the cases
each one of them closely enough.
You just did on the other four.
Let's give an opinion.
Pardon me?
You just did on the other four, though.
I don't know.
There were no,
you're asking me about,
that was the Trump cases.
Yeah, yeah.
So now I'm asking about this.
And I'm talking about,
and I said that because it was age.
Okay.
All right.
And so none of these folks on the proud boys,

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I think we're in their 70s.

Okay.

So that's the difference between the two.

But I'm going to try to answer your question.

Great.

I just don't want to say

I'm giving an opinion as to each and every sentence.

Okay.

What I want to say about it though
is that what they did on January 6th
was unlawful.

It was extremely serious.

And it requires imprisonment.

Okay.

And so each of these individual cases
have nuances and individual facts through them
that I'm not, I will tell you,
I'm not completely conversant in.

Okay.

So the difference between a 15-year sentence
and an 18-year sentence or a 22-year sentence,
if I sat down and I delved into
what was presented at trial
and what was presented in the sentencing memoranda,
I'd give you an opinion.

But I haven't done that.

Okay.

To be honest with you, I haven't done it.

Can I ask one final question?

From my perspective,
one of the reasons that
the polling can sometimes veer this way
is that in the Republican polls,
a lot of the attacks against you,
Governor, focus on, obviously,
Bridgegate and Beachgate
and then this kind of like
theoretical corruption allegations
directed at you and your staff.
Now, your staff was convicted of wire fraud,
but then the Supreme Court overturned it 9 to 0.
Right.

And now what they said, though,

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was that there was corruption,
but there wasn't corruption to try to get money,
which is why the wire fraud,
I think that's what Elena Kagan said in the ruling,
the majority ruling, it was,
and it was 9-0.
So it was very, very clear that
the DOJ just kind of took, again,
to your case, talking about Trump,
the wrong charge is almost.
Okay.
And what they did was not illegal,
even if what they did
may have been illegal under a different statute
in any event.
It would be great for you to set the record
on Bridgegate and Beachgate.
We're really calling
Beachgate and corruption, like really?
Well, I think what people got upset was,
and I'm just going to repeat this,
I don't have an issue with this,
there was a state beach that was closed,
and there was pictures of you and your family
on that beach when everybody else
was told to stay at home.
That's, I guess that's what people point to.
I'm just giving you, just address it however you want
so you can be definitive in your own language.
All right.
So let's deal with the beach situation.
Every beach in New Jersey that day was open,
except for one.
Every beach in New Jersey.
So the idea that people across the state of New Jersey
were kept off the beach that day,
and me and my family were the only people on the beach
is completely wrong.
So everybody who wanted to go to the beach that day
could go to the beach somewhere in New Jersey,
except for the state park.
And the reason the state park was closed
was because the legislature did not send me a budget

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in time.

If they'd sent me a budget, I would have signed it,
and the beach would have been open.

They refused to send me a budget.

Now, having said that factually, contextually,
it was a mistake for me to go on the beach.

Now, I told everybody when the budget standoff was going on
that my family was going to be at that house
and they were going to go on the beach,
but we were not going to use any services,
lifeguards or garbage service or anything else,
because it wouldn't be open.

So I told everybody that upfront.

I shouldn't have gone out there myself
because I was the governor.

It was a mistake.

I went out there and spent an hour with my family.

It was a mistake.

I hardly think it merits a gate.

Yeah, I wouldn't give it a gate.

A crefflosal, maybe.

And I would hardly call it corruption, okay?

Yeah, no, it's not corruption.

It's a crefflosal.

On Bridgegate.

Let's remember, this has been investigated

by a Democratic state legislature

with subpoena power,

by a Democratic U.S. attorney with an ax to grind, for me,
with subpoena power.

And in both of those investigations,
and also an investigation that we authorized internally,
all three of the investigations agreed on one thing.

I had no knowledge of what happened.

No one told me what was going on.

And I didn't find out about it until well after the fact.

And nobody's ever disputed that who's done an investigation.

And if they thought I'd done something wrong,
given the ridiculous indictments they brought,
I'm sure they would have thrown me in there too
if they had anything they could have gone with.

These were three employees who did something
extraordinarily stupid.

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And they should have been fired and they were.
As soon as I found out about it, they were all fired.
They should never work in public office again.
But what they did was stupid, not criminal.
And if we start criminalizing every time someone does something stupid,
we won't have enough jails.
And when you get Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Clarence Thomas
to agree on an overreach by the Department of Justice,
it was a politically motivated prosecution
because I had just been reelected with 61% of the vote
in a blue state and was ahead of Hillary Clinton
by eight points in national polls.
That's why they did it.
They thought they were going to get me.
They cooperated with the guy who admits he was the mastermind
of the situation.
They cooperated with him to try to get me.
And once they realized they couldn't get me,
they had to indict somebody.
So they indicted the two other people.
I believe you.
I think that the DOJ engages in a lot of local prosecutions.
Why isn't Jack Smith's prosecution politically minded?
And the point I'll come back to is that Merrick Garland did this analysis
when he first came in on whether Trump was guilty of incitement on January 6th.
And they had like a memo come back saying, sorry, we can't get him for that.
There was then a leak in the Washington Post from Biden himself
saying that he thought Merrick Garland was being kind of wimpy
and that they should go after Trump.
And then lo and behold, Merrick Garland appoints Jack Smith to go get Trump.
And Jack Smith's case depends on knowing the inner workings of Trump's mind,
this like fraud on the American people idea,
that he not only made up this stolen election narrative, but he knew it was false,
which I don't see how they're ever going to prove beyond a reasonable doubt.
So why isn't that a political prosecution?
I mean, Biden clearly wanted it.
He instigated it through a leak to the Washington Post.
Or at least that seems to be the chronology,
whether it was deliberate or not.
And it requires Jack Smith to prove this impossible theory
because it requires knowing what Trump was really thinking
when he was saying all this stuff.
So how is that not an equally political prosecution?

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All right, so let me separate the two.

So you're talking just about Jan 6th, not about the classified documents.

Correct.

I'm just talking about the Jack Smith theory that Trump perpetrated a fraud because he knew his stolen election narrative was false.

Well, look, I think that there is going to be a lot of interesting testimony that will be given in that case regarding what Donald Trump really knew and what he really thought, what he was telling people at the time.

And I don't think it's as clear-cut as you're making it out to be.

Now, what I said at the time when he brought the Jan 6th case is it is aggressive.

There's no question it's an aggressive prosecution.

Do I believe it's political?

I don't know, but I will say it's aggressive.

It's much more aggressive than the classified documents case because you're exactly right that state of mind,

which is a part of every criminal case, will be a part of this one.

And trying to get inside Donald Trump's mind is a dangerous thing because he says so many contradictory things, right?

So he was saying to me during debate prep in 2020

that he was absolutely convinced that he could lose the selection.

Not that it would be stolen, that he could lose it

because of COVID and COVID ruins his great economy and now he's going to lose.

So he said a lot of different things to a lot of different people over time.

And all I'd say, David, is that it is going to be an aggressive case to prove.

And by the way, if they don't prove it, it will be a stain on the Department of Justice for bringing the case at all.

So then why support it?

I mean, look, hold on, let me agree with you.

I'm going to finish that.

I know what you're going to say.

So I'll finish it.

I believe, given what I know, that Donald Trump does not believe that the election was stolen.

That's what I believe, from knowing him for 22 years

and from being with him in much of the pre-election period

and him expressing his very genuine concerns about the fact that he was losing to Biden

and that he could lose to Biden, not because of mail-in ballots, because of COVID,

that I don't believe he really believes the election was stolen.

But can you prove that beyond a reasonable doubt?

Well, that's the part that's aggressive, David,

and I don't know all the evidence they have.

I suspect they've got a number of people who are going to tell the jury that Trump told them that he thought he lost.

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But we're going to see.

But we're going to see.

And that's why I call it aggressive.

By the way, let me just get on the record here that I agree with you that a lot of the underlying behavior was really bad.

And I've said so on the pod before.

I'm not defending the underlying behavior.

What I question is the wisdom of one president, basically Biden, his Justice Department going after the former president, who is currently the leading candidate in the election against him, and doing it within a year before the election as opposed to three years ago. How is that wise?

David, let me ask you a question.

First off, if they had indicted Donald Trump six months after January 6th, you know what everybody would have said?

Brush the judgment.

No good investigation.

They had this pre-determined.

You can't win as a prosecutor on that one.

Either you went too quick or you waited too long.

So I don't buy that at all.

I think it's bull.

Now, on the question of whether or not a president should allow his Justice Department to charge someone who is his predecessor and potentially an opponent again, well, what's the alternative?

Let's take it away from the January 6th one and look at the documents one.

If he obstructed justice,

if he lied and obstructed the grand jury subpoena, if he kept classified documents he was not entitled to keep and then hid them from his own lawyers when they were trying to respond to that, if he instructed people to delete surveillance camera video, which would have shown him having people move those documents, then all you have to do is declare for president and you don't get prosecuted.

I mean, I understand it's a lousy situation,

but there are a number of people who believe that the only reason Donald Trump is running for president again is to be able to make that argument.

And so I understand it's an office.

No, no, I think he wants retribution from the seat of power for everybody.

But Governor, I mean, hold on, I want to ask you a question.

There are other people.

No, no, no, I want to ask why.

You did for under, I'll do one.

So Governor Christie, let me ask you a question because you know Trump, do you think he tried to overturn the election?

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And do you think given the chance to overturn the election and steal the election, Donald Trump, based on your knowledge of his character for multiple decades and working with him, do you think he would have done it?
Do you think he's that criminal minded?
I don't think he would have any, he would have had any problem with the election being overturned.
Okay.
And I think if it, if it, if it was, he would have been more than happy to have his rear end sleeping in the White House tonight.
Now, I think he evolved to that position in this respect.
I've had the opportunity to meet a number of different presidents, every president going back to Bush 41.
Every one of them, regardless of my disagreements with them on policy, were matured and humbled by the office, except for him.
Okay.
Well said.
The office made him worse.
It made him a worse person.
I've known him for 22 years.
The guy I met in 2001 would not have done what 2020 Donald Trump did.
And I think he is a perfect example of power having corrupted someone to the point where he was willing to not only engage in that conduct, but to essentially threaten his own vice president to try to get him to do something.
Do you think Russiagate played a, played a role in that?
I mean, meaning here, Donald Trump, you know, he's the ultimate outsider, maybe has a chip on his shoulder about not being accepted in, you know, by certain elements of society.
He wins the White House is this huge shock.
And rather than accepting it, the entire Democratic party said his election was illegitimate and they claimed that basically somehow Putin masterminded it.
And then they subjected him to two years of this Mueller investigation, which turned up nothing, but they claimed that he was basically an agent.
It, you still believe in the steel dossier, okay?
I didn't say that, but a lot of people went to jail and he did ask the Russians for help.
The rest of the world knows that steel dossier was completely made up.
I didn't talk about the steel dossier.
I'm talking about their relationship with Russia.
That was the basis for the whole Russiagate oath.
I'm talking about him asking for help from Russia.
You're the last person to live in that simulation.
That's not correct.
I'm asking the governor a question.
Do you think that two years of this Russiagate hopes basically drove Trump to this behavior or played a role in it?

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I'll go with your, with your last piece, not the first one.

I, I no doubt that it contributed to his feeling that people were after him.

No doubt.

And I said from the beginning, I thought the Russia thing was complete crap.

And the reason I thought it was, was because I was there in 2016.

That campaign was so bad and so disorganized, they couldn't have arranged a two car funeral, let alone conspired with the Russian government to interfere with the election.

I was there.

It was amateurish.

And it won because they ran against the worst presidential candidate in my lifetime in Hillary Clinton.

So I said from the beginning, I thought the Russia investigation was illegitimate.

And it was wrong.

Do I think it contributed to his attitude?

I think it did.

But I don't think, David, it would be fair to say that that's what made him that way.

Okay, fair enough, fair enough.

But I think there's a lot more that, there's a lot more that contributed to it than that.

But yeah, I would certainly concede that because I objected to the Russia investigation at the time, in real time, publicly.

Kudos to you for that.

Cause I think you've been vindicated by what's happened in the last few years.

Last question for me on documents.

Okay, do you think that there's a selective prosecution issue here?

Because Sandy Berger stuffed documents in his pants from a clean room, never prosecuted.

Petraeus had a huge classified documents problem, slap on the wrist.

I mean, it seems like, and by the way, Biden had documents by his beloved Corvette and in offices all over the place, going back many years.

So, I mean, isn't this document's case, it seems like no one really wanted to prosecute this law until Trump did it.

And now it's like, get Trump.

Now, look, I think Trump did this one to himself, David.

If he had turned over the documents he illegally had, at any point when he was being requested to, from February of 2021, through to when the search occurred, there would be no prosecution.

Well, I agree with that.

And the proof of that.

Let's get these other guys.

Because they gave the documents back.

Because look, Biden gave the documents back.

I mean, Pence gave the documents back.

When asked, what this guy did was obstructed it in every way he could.

I don't want people looking through my boxes, my boxes.

This guy is like a freak about these boxes.

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I'm telling you, I used to campaign with him, he would have a box of documents.
Now, back then, it was 2016, it was a box of documents from Trump Tower.
No one could touch them.
No one could look at them.
He'd go through them a little bit.
But he literally had a seat for his box of documents next to him on his plane.
No one could sit next to him.
The box of documents went next to him.
So there's a psychosis here on the documents, David, that's deep.
All right?
Okay, but maybe that isn't the case.
He did this to himself.
He did it to himself.
He walked into it.
I agree.
He totally walked into this.
No, no.
He sprinted into it with his arms wide open and he screwed himself.
But in the process, he screwed the country.
But what you're describing is an idiosyncratic issue.
He liked his boxes.
He had mementos in them.
This was not a national security issue.
Oh, sure it was.
How?
Sure it was.
How?
You cannot permit the president of the United States to be flashing around in a
ran war plan on the on the deck at Mar-a-Lago.
Sorry, not allowed, especially not after your president.
And you know what?
He couldn't declassified any documents he wanted to when he was president.
He didn't.
And now he's trying to say he mind melded them to be declassified.
Come on, David.
This stuff is such bullshit.
It's laughable.
But you agree the president has an unlimited authority to declassify documents, right?
Of course.
So he didn't do it through the process you wanted.
But who's to say that he didn't do it?
No.
His attorney general said he didn't do it.

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His White House counsel said he didn't do it.
But his view is he did it.
So who's to say he didn't?
No, no. His view, he declassified other documents the appropriate way.
These he just thought about declassifying.
Therefore they were declassified.
Come on.
I agree it's a bad argument.
I agree it's a bad argument.
But I guess.
It's not a bad argument.
But David won't make it anyway.
David, it's not a bad argument.
It's not an argument.
Come back any time you want, Chris.
It's not an argument.
I think you got to sit in.
I think you got to sit in.
I mean, look, you know, I will tell you guys,
like I am very sympathetic to executive authority.
I've been a governor of the state that has the strongest constitutional
governorship in America.
But you got to follow the law.
When the law empowers you to the extent that the United States
president is empowered, that should be enough.
You shouldn't have to act outside the law.
And here's why he did it.
He didn't do it to sell the documents.
He didn't do them to give them to some foreign power.
He did them to show off.
Look what I have.
Look, I'm still really the president.
This is the real core problem with him, David.
But doesn't this pale in comparison to the crimes of the Biden family?
I mean, Robert Peter.
Well, I don't know.
Do we have time to talk about the two billion dollars
that Jared Kushner has gotten from the Saudis and why he got that money?
Is it because he's such an expert investor, the guy who bought 666 Fifth Avenue
and nearly bankrupted his entire company?
I mean, he's actually a pretty smart guy.
I mean, oh, yeah.
Oh, no, he's a genius.

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He's an absolute genius, David.

And that's why the Saudis gave him two billion dollars.

He was out of office.

We're talking about, we're talking about, we're talking about,
you just talked about earlier, Sacks, that we had to stop the breath.

The Biden family, Biden is vice president and his son is running around the world collecting money.

David, what, why would a president of the United States,
when he has somebody like Mike Pompeo as his secretary of state,
who's been a congressman, a West Point graduate,
member of the military, CIA director, secretary of state,
why is he sending Jared Kushner over to negotiate with the Saudis?
He got the Abraham Accords done.

No, no, no.

And by the way, now he gets, wait, no, no, he gets the, you know,
oh, so now we're not giving Pompeo the credit for the Abraham Accords.
It's Jared Kushner.

Look, in the end, Pompeo closed that deal.

Do you think the Abraham Accords were a good idea or a bad idea?

Great idea.

Great idea.

Why don't you give Kushner credit?

He was definitely involved.

No, no, no.

He's involved.

Congratulations.

And why was he sent, why was he sent in the first place?

Because of his extensive, his extensive foreign policy experience.

Managing apartment buildings in New Jersey.

That's what he was doing.

So look, I absolutely believe that as I answered your question very directly
before, that the only reason Hunter Biden was hired for these things
was to get influence with his father.

Absolutely.

And I think he should go to jail.

But we can't look at the Jared and Ivanka making 40 plus million dollars a year
while they were in the White House, getting two billion from the Saudis
to invest after they leave the White House and say that's not a gift as well,
not to mention the fact that he's spending campaign money to pay his legal fees
when he's supposed to be a billionaire.

How about you sell the Trump Tower apartment since you don't live there anymore
and pay your legal fees with that?

Or how about sell one of your frigging golf courses to pay your legal fees with that?

But instead, a \$100 average donation from Americans who donated to something called

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Save America, which was supposed to fight the steal of the election, is now being spent to pay his legal fees because he took classified documents illegally out of the White House.

And by the way, that same organization paid Kimberly Guilfoyle 60 grand to give a three minute speech on January 6th and paid \$208,000 to Melania Stylist as political strategy. There's plenty of grift to go around.

I'll tell you this, the grift is deep.

The Christie administration, no member of my family will make money off the fact that I'm president.

You can't say that about Trump or Biden.

Okay, this has been an amazing two hours killing me with governor Chris Christie.

Well done, so on.

Thank God I had these lozenges.

All right, I have no voice.

Final question.

When you did this karaoke with David Freberg, did you do Thunder Road living on a prayer, Rosalita, what was the song or did you guys do?

I don't remember which song David and I did together, but I did do Thunder Road, Karaoke in that small bar in that little town in Idaho.

I think I do also remember there being a karaoke on a Backstreet Boys song.

Oh, that's definitely Freberg.

Yeah, that's definitely Freberg.

And I don't think Freberg was in that one.

I don't think.

Do you remember David?

Which song we did?

Nah.

Endless Love?

I don't remember.

No, it definitely wasn't that.

I don't remember, there was a group thing on.

Don't go breaking my hot TTD Elton John?

Yeah.

There's got to be one in there.

Listen, Governor, we really appreciate you coming on.

We wish you great success.

Congratulations on New Hampshire.

And really, really thank you.

Did a great job today.

Thank you for being so forthright.

Thank you guys for giving me the look.

I love the opportunity to be able to go into more depth about this in anything other than UFOs.

So that's really good.

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Really good.

Oh, wait, we have another hour of UFO questions.

I would really encourage you to spread this gospel of the most thoughtful way to beat back corruption is something like zero-base budgeting across the entire federal government.

Yeah, I liked that too.

That was a great.

Nobody says it.

People are, I think, RFK and Vivek, scratch it.

But I think you could nail it if you take it and want to run with it.

And there's just a lot of money that's probably sloshing on the sidelines that needs to get reallocated.

And I'm sure you saw how viral John Seward's interview with the undersecretary of defense for budget went.

That was an incredible interview.

And obviously it hits a nerve with a lot of people.

So it's a really important point.

It speaks a lot to the broader issue.

Well, I'm glad to be here.

I'm happy that I did not take my son's briefing.

But I can guarantee you that he's going to be listening.

He's very stressed.

He's actually, he works for the New York Mets.

He's down in Dominican Republic today.

And he called me from the DR and he said, is today the all in day?

And I said, yes, today's the day.

He goes, call me right afterwards.

So he's going to tell him it was great.

We had a great two hours and he's going to enjoy listening to it.

And now any time you guys want me back, I'm back.

Fix the meds.

Thank you very much.

I'm on the board there too.

I think that's a bit of a problem.

That may be worse than zero-based budgeting.

I don't know.

At least the Knicks look like they build a nice foundation here.

I like where my Knicks are.

Don't give up on the meds yet.

Wait till next year.

Oh, I'm not giving up.

We'll get there.

All right.

Two hours with the governor going around the horn here.

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Friedberg, your thoughts after two hours with Governor Christie.

Where was he strong?

Where do you disagree with him?

What do you think of his presidency after two hours of intimate discussion here on All in Puckest?

I don't know if I've got a huge shift in opinion.

He's a very personable guy.

He has a good command of the subjects.

He's got good experience running a state.

So those are good qualifying criteria.

Obviously, this is a very challenging race for him.

I'm not sure if he hits any zingers that really helps accelerate him past the momentum that Vivek has.

And obviously, the lead that Trump has with the conservative party support with DeSantis.

So it seems like it's going to be a tough campaign and a tough race for him.

And I'm not sure he brings anything today that shows how he's going to get ahead of his problem.

So that's the campaign.

Let's talk about for you, if you were to contrast him to other Republican candidates,

DeSantis, Halley, Vivek, where does he fall for you personally?

Yeah, I remain of the concern that there's a giant meteor hitting a fiscal meteor, hitting the United States, and everyone's talking about a lot of other stuff.

And it's the don't look up documentary to me.

Okay. And he's the most attuned to that in your mind?

Or is it a good point of view?

I think it's alignment around keeping military spending and this discussion around corruption.

It's such a micro problem relative to the macro condition.

Again, 31% of U.S. debt coming up for refinancing this year.

It's going to be, and we're already seeing, by the way, this year, interest expense on the debt is greater than the military spending.

If you had to pick two candidates on the Republican party that were most intriguing to you for your vote, which two would they be?

I'm going to skip that question for now.

Okay. Chamath, I'll go to you.

Post this two-hour discussion.

I thought he was great. I'm curious how you thought were the strong points in this discussion.

And then I guess we can talk about his campaign, as Freeberg just did.

But then we could also talk about how he resonates with you, and in terms of getting your vote, maybe where he sits.

I don't think my opinion has changed much before or after.

I think that he's a very personable, charming guy, but I'm not sure that he says anything that's different from the establishment wing of the Republican party.

And I think that the winning candidate, whether I agree with it or not, is irrelevant at this point.

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But the formula has been laid bare for everybody to see.
And I think that you have to have radical ideas.
And so when you think about the people that are getting the most attention on both the Democratic and the Republican side, what they're essentially pushing back on is all of this orthodoxy.
And if he really wants to win, he has to embrace being unorthodox and heterodox.
And he doesn't have enough heterodoxical policies to cut through.
So he just cannot win as a practical matter.
So if he embraces those heterodoxies because he believes in them, he has a chance.
But if he doesn't, it's going to be Trump versus Vivek.
So if it winds up being Biden, Vivek, Trump, Christie, Nikki in this sort of like final race towards finish line, which two candidates do you find most appealing right now?
Not saying you vote for them, but which two are resonating with Chamath, Polyhopitia most?
I'm still pretty open-minded.
I haven't decided.
I know who doesn't resonate with me.
Tell me.
It's DeSantis.
Okay. So DeSantis is off the table.
Everybody else is still in play.
And I was very clear early on that his campaign was DOA.
And I think that that's probably just going to...
He's going to have a withering kind of embarrassing end to the campaign, unfortunately for him.
But I think the heterodoxical rhetoric is going to get ramped up both by RFK and by Vivek.
And I think it's going to put a lot of pressure and by Trump.
And I think it's going to put a lot of pressure on Biden and it's going to put a lot of pressure on the other Republican nominees to cut through the noise here.
It's an interesting point, Chamath, because if the chorus becomes this heterodox point of view, it looks really bad.
Biden is almost in this truly defensive mode, because then you have multiple parties speaking similarly about the establishment.
I think there's a very good chance that Biden's son...
He's indicted this week.
Is in jail by the time the election comes around, which I think also speaks very poorly to the risk that there is some clear links of corruption that come out.
And I think that that's going to put the election under severe pressure.
And I think you can bet that every single Republican mega donor is going to come out of the woodwork to fund the super PAC.

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That's going to blast the airwaves all across the country with that content.
So that's, I think, a foregone conclusion if it looks like there is fire,
where there looks right now is smoke.
And if David Weiss acts this decisively and it moves the trial quickly,
which I suspect it will, this is all bad news for Biden.
And so you have that on that side.
The Republicans have the red meat that they need.
The heterodoxy on both sides is what's getting all the attention.
So I think what Donald Trump did in hindsight was really break the glass on being able to say
the things you couldn't say.
And that will now be the formula for candidates to win.
Yeah.
Just for folks who haven't been watching the news,
Justice Department is believed to indict Hunter.
On the gun charges this month, I think they're still investing,
gating the potential corruption where there's smoke.
Maybe there's fire and if it leads to Biden.
And so this whole race could be totally flipped upside down at any moment.
Same with Trump and his indictments.
The gun charge is a nothing charge.
Just so everyone understands what that is.
When he applied to get a firearm, you have to take,
you have to check off these checkboxes on the form.
And one of them is apparently that you don't have a drug problem.
And so he lied on that form, I guess.
But that's the kind of charge that I personally don't believe they should be going after him
for because I don't think they had prosecuted an ordinary person for that.
Yeah.
And in his defense, Hunter said, I have no problem scoring drugs.
So I don't have a drug problem.
I can get them anytime I need them.
It's one of these weird kind of, almost again, like a paperwork charge.
And remember that what the DOJ tried to do was a settlement with Hunter Biden
where he would plead guilty on that same gun charge because it's kind of a nothing charge.
But then buried deep in that settlement was a broad immunity on all the foreign lobbying
he was doing, the FARA Act violations.
And then it came out and the judge said, wait a second,
like that's too much.
Like what are you doing?
And the judge rejected the settlement.
So frankly, I view the charges by the DOJ on the gun charge as a misdirection
of what the real issue is with Hunter Biden.
He was running around the world collecting money with being an unregistered foreign agent,

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foreign lobbyist.

That's the crux of the issue is that's the corruption.

But the point is, that's what the DOJ should be looking at.

Not these like...

Well, that's what they are looking at.

Did Hunter use drugs in the wrong way?

David, I think looking at the tax evasion tax fraud charges, that is their way of looking at that.

So I think it's going to come out.

I think at this point...

No, they're looking at both.

Everybody will have the truth.

If the Bidens are truly not guilty, that will be clearly established now in this process.

But if he was acting as an unregistered agent of these foreign governments, that is also going to come out.

And if there were links between him and his father and communications, that's also going to come out.

I think that...

But he hasn't even been indicted on that yet, right?

Yeah, I understand, but I think it takes time.

I think they will thoughtfully put it together, but...

I'm not confident about it,

given that they wanted to give him broad immunity on those charges.

I think that...

No, but I think David Weiss is under such a microscope right now.

The idea that he doesn't act conclusively here,

I think would be a huge problem.

And then the next president, if it's Republican, will reopen it.

So whatever happens here will need to be definitive.

And I think the special prosecutor probably understands that at this point.

So let's go back to your impressions before we go down the Biden-Biden-Biden rabbit hole here.

What are your thoughts after two hours with Chris Christie?

Anything changed in your outlook on him?

And then I'm curious, are you still teamed to Santa's all the way?

So on Christie, I like talking to him more than I thought I was going to.

I think he was easy to talk to.

I think the two hours went by pretty quickly.

I think he brought his energy level down to the right place for a podcast.

I mean, it was a little different than when he's very pugnacious on the debate stage and kind of grandstand.

And he engaged in a discussion with us.

So I thought that was positive.

The only time his energy really changed was basically in the last five minutes

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when he went on to a full-on Trump diatribe.
And it was almost like a little bit of TDS kicked in.
That being said, his position on Trump was a little bit more nuanced than I was expecting.
First of all, he admitted the whole Russiagate thing was total baloney.
Second, he said that with respect to these state charges, the Alvin Bragg in New York and the Fannie Willis in Atlanta, those charges should not have been brought.
Yeah, I thought that was pretty good.
I kind of agree with him on those.
I agree with his asset.
I thought that was intellectually honest.
Did you feel intellectual honesty from him?
Yeah, I think he really believes this.
Third, I took a couple of tries by Chamath and then me to get him to say this, but he said he would not put Trump in jail.
He's too old for that.
And I thought that was, I wasn't sure where he was going to come out on that.
I didn't know if he was going to say Trump deserves a life sentence or not.
Yeah, we should have asked him if he would pardon him if he was president.
He did.
He said, he said I wouldn't pardon him, but I commute his sentence.
So he didn't have to spend time in jail.
So I thought that was new information.
And again, a more nuanced view than I was expecting.
On the documents case, he said that Trump ran into the charges, which frankly, I agree with.
I think Trump could have avoided that easily.
However, Christie said he did it for idiosyncratic reasons.
He loves his box of mementos.
He didn't really address my point.
Same theory you and I have.
Yeah.
You know who else loves their mementos?
I have, I have a handful of kids under the age of five who love blankets and.
Yes.
The blankie, Teddy pacifiers, Teddy.
Yeah.
I would just go a little further and just say, listen, if he did this for idiosyncratic reasons rather than nefarious reasons, like selling state secrets, then I think you apply the same standard of prosecution as they did to Petraeus or to Biden himself or to.
The thing you keep missing is that those people gave those back.
You keep missing that sex.
I don't know why you have that blindspot.

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Because he basically said that Trump has an anxiety complex and he sells suits with that box of documents.

That's what he said.

Cuckoo gaga, cuckoo gaga.

No, but that's what he said.

I would treat Trump the same way as Sandy Berger.

I mean, come on.

Those guys all didn't obstruct justice.

So are you still teasing the sentence?

This is the same moving on.

The last point was on the Jack Smith charges where

he admitted that Jack Smith has to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Trump knew that his election denial argument was false.

And I think he pretty much admitted that that would be a very, very hard thing to prove.

But he said he wanted to wait to see what evidence they had.

To me, that kind of begs the question of why you bring that case in the first place.

Any event.

So that's on Trump.

I think what I saw there was a little bit of TDS, but a more nuanced overall perspective when he got into the details.

On foreign policy, I think we had a lot of interesting conversation there about the mismanagement of the military industrial complex.

And I think Jamath had some really interesting questions there that I followed up on.

And really, you couldn't get him to say anything other than he wouldn't necessarily increase the size of the defense budget until you did the efficiency survey.

But he kind of had to be pushed to even get there.

And what I would just say is that on that question, on military spending combined with the question of Ukraine, he pretty much has the standard establishment Republican position, which is the only thing Biden has done wrong is not move aggressively enough on Ukraine.

That giving mixed messages, not being hawkish enough.

I'm sorry.

But Biden has had the most hawkish policy on Ukraine that any president's ever had.

And the only reason there's been hand-wringing about giving them F-16s is because it could start World War III.

And I personally want Biden thinking about that.

So again, I think this neocon Republican position that involves Chris Christie and Haley and Pence and Mitch McConnell, based on the whole Republican establishment, they basically believe that Biden, who says we need to support Ukraine for as long as it takes as much as it takes, he's still not doing enough.

I just don't fundamentally buy that argument.

You still teams the Santas?

Here's my view on it.

So look, I would support the Santas.

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I also would support Vivek.

For me.

Oh, whoa, whoa, whoa.

This is new information.

So you're saying you are now equally open-minded to Vivek and Santas?

It's not equally minded.

But look, for me, the most...

What percent?

Here's the way I divide it.

I divide Kennedy's at this point into acceptable versus unacceptable.

Okay.

And for me, the number one issue is whether the president, the next president, will seek to de-escalate or end the Ukraine war, or they will seek to escalate it.

Chris Christie, along with all these others, by saying that Biden has been too dovish on Ukraine, is effectively saying he wants to do even more on Ukraine.

So where is that pushing?

I'm not willing to live for the next four years on the knife's edge of World War III.

I don't want the next year's president...

So that puts you in Vivek's camp?

To put...

Well, I don't want the sword of World War III hanging over our heads.

So that puts you in Vivek's camp?

Well, no, I think that the candidates who said that they would either end or de-escalate Ukraine are Vivek, DeSantis, and Trump has said it.

They're the only three...

Oh, and sorry, Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

Okay, but you're not going to vote for him.

So that puts you in Vivek...

Well, I don't know.

I mean, he might be my favorite, to be honest.

Would you pick him over Trump?

I would certainly take Kennedy over Trump.

You would?

Wow, this is incredible breaking news, folks.

This is all incredible.

Wow, thanks.

Look, for me, this is the limit test issue is,

are you going to escalate or de-escalate the Ukraine War?

And I think that these hawkish Republican candidates pose an unacceptable risk or three.

What do you think, Jason?

Yeah, Jason, what do you think?

I thought he broke your heart there in a couple of places.

No, actually, I don't expect all candidates to line up with my belief system perfectly.

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Obviously, he's well-spoken.
Obviously, he's qualified.
I'm looking for a moderate, like Friedberg.
I think the existential crisis of the balance sheet is my top issue.
I voted Republican about 25% and Democrat 75%.
I'm literally a moderate and an independent.
And right now, I really don't think Biden can be President or Trump.
So that leaves me with RFK on one side,
and it leaves me with Nikki Haley and Christie on the other side.
And Nikki Haley and Christie are really into balancing the budget.
And so I'm leaning towards voting Republican if those are the two candidates.
Now, the thing that I think handicapping this election is not being talked about all that much
because we have the Trump-Biden rematch taking all the air out of the room is,
I don't know that Biden makes it to the starting line,
nor do I think Trump makes it to the starting line.
And so that changes everything.
And who knows what percentage chance that is.
I don't think any of us can give it a perfect handicap.
But let's say that is the case.
Then I think there's a lot of lanes open here,
and I think the election will be once again determined by moderates.
And I think women who are still very much upset about the Roe v. Wade issue,
and I think those two things are going to play a significant role.
And that's where I think Nikki Haley and Chris Christie believe it's a state's issue,
and they're not into the national ban for abortion.
And I think moderates are not into Biden, or I don't think they're going to be into RFK.
I think they're going to be into Nikki Haley,
and I think Nikki Haley could happen, and I think Chris Christie could happen.
So I hope we get Nikki Haley on here, because I don't know her enough,
but I would like to have that to our discussion.
So I'm leaning towards Haley, Christie, if they make it.
All right, this has been an amazing episode of the All in Podcast.
We went for over two hours.
Enjoy the one and a half times episode, everybody,
because next week is the All in Summit,
and we're not going to tape next week.
So you get a week off from the pod while we bank, I think, like 20 amazing
guests from Ray Dalio to Elon Musk to Mr. Beast.
I mean, the list of people.
Gwyneth Paltrow, that Freeberg has put together is extraordinary.
Congratulations to Freeberg on a program even better than last year's program.
Is it unprecedented success here?
So great, great job, Freeberg, and the team over at the production board.

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And the parties might be fun too.

I got my tux.

I'm ready to go.

We will see you all in Los Angeles, or some portion of you, about 1% of you,

in Los Angeles next week.

Sorry for the FOMO, everybody.

But Freeberg will be releasing the episodes on Twitter X,

and YouTube are the exclusive location.

So you're not going to get in your podcast feeds flooded with the 20 tux.

You got to go to X, follow All in Podcasts on X,

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You put on the alert.

I think you're going to drop them every day, or every two days,

Freeberg, something in that sort of pace.

So you got 20 days of content coming at you.

Coming at you for the dictator himself, Chamath Polly-Happitya,

the Sultan of Science, David Freeberg, Chairperson of Heel and Summit 2023.

Great job.

And Rain Man, the architect himself.

With that incredible Gordon Gekko hair.

Wow, looking great, Sax.

I am the undisputed world's greatest moderator,

according to the YouTube comments, and we'll see you next week.

Bye bye.

[illegible]