**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:00:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=O4RDlUdfD8ckr9IAApaXmNCLXLWuIn52qyektd--ixNwyuHNwgLxg9yxeYxR8V8OKjIPSXzqQPailEHoZjyP5nc5FdE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=21.18) What's up everybody. My name is Demetri Kofinas. I'm a media entrepreneur, financial analyst, and the host of Hidden Forces, a podcast that helps investors, entrepreneurs, and everyday citizens get an edge by equipping themselves with the knowledge needed to anticipate the challenges and opportunities of tomorrow. By sharing my critical thinking approach and by challenging consensus narratives about the power structures shaping our world, I help you make the connections to see the bigger picture, empowering you to make smarter decisions.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:00:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=t5JH5fFuHugbMZLcDUKV10Uwd6s0jUXkW5bx803OG-ZpUX9Bi_xjC9zlCjtdSqcl7x3SkDFB1gHu8X3nGT8ER1oxCCY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=55.261) On this week's episode, I speak with Josh Rogin, a Washington Post foreign policy columnist and author of the book, "Chaos Under Heaven: Trump, XI and the Battle For the 21st Century." This is hands down the best book I've read, and I've read many on the subject of China and the Chinese Communist Party. It explains in incredible detail how the Chinese Communist Party works. Its history, its nature, its motivations, operations, and objectives, and it does so in a language that is both accessible and even, dare I say, entertaining. Because it's full of personal anecdotes colored by Josh's own reporting which is a testament to his skill as an investigative journalist and as someone with a reputation for breaking big stories.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:01:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wMD4F9uUZdZ8v08jtDvjtrANi-EzsSX_9i-u1lcZA_spLkRcFO0uTpmK4ZR9_UUlN0A0DsNUxTUXpd1EIgvKrOFNAQs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=104.44) While we don't break any stories today, even for those of you who are regular listeners to this podcast and have heard any or all of our previous episodes on China, some of today's episode is probably going to be news to you. In this conversation, you're going to learn how CCP influence operations work, who they target, and how they compromise influential individuals in both the public and private sectors, including CEOs, university administrators, and elected officials along with their spouses, friends, and family members. You're also going to learn how the CCP uses tactics of blackmail, repression, and counter-programming both within and outside of its borders in order to coerce and drown out its critics as part of a relentless culture of intimidation that is foundational to the party's identity and history as an underground influence organization. Lastly, you're going to learn why all of this matters to those of us living outside of China and how western governments should respond to a threat that is no longer gathering but is in fact, quite clear and immediate to those of us who have devoted time and attention to understanding this very important issue.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:02:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=z_KJhuldMaEJBnzLtkYrdMMUhKbaD3elKrXi0QkGysCZUCJJyOXJTA4dyffBODIXdkk5KnSEB_0jNMwj_1-0sz4UATY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=177.491) In the subscriber overtime, Josh and I delve deeper into the financial side of this story and how for years the CCP has used the US financial markets to fund the build-out of not only China's military but also its surveillance systems, including those used to monitor and control repressed minorities and the country's autonomous regions, most notably, in Xinjiang province, where over 12 million Uyghurs are currently living under what international human rights organizations and governments agree are genocidal conditions that involve among other atrocities, forced labor, compulsory reeducation, and coercive harvesting of hair and bodily organs. We also delve in Josh's independent reporting on the origins of COVID-19, the troubling connections between the Wuhan Institute of Virology and America's own public health officials, and why the lab release hypothesis is actually much more credible than the mainstream media would have you believe.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:03:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-ohrYhfVsbV4MdBOqaQsIGFiK3qhnhvcTNzEACWT1MWmREkvnftmo34SemMPT5z-JcQ1rESLioo1H9MZQTl_tGhVUu4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=239.27) This is a serious conversation, no doubt about it. But everything you're about to hear today has been widely reported on and is becoming increasingly well understood among those in positions of power within the corporate and policy making communities. The rise of China in this context signifies something very different than what most of us imagined or hoped for in the beginning of the 21st century and demands an urgency and resoluteness that is arguably comparable to that last scene in our collective response to the Soviet threat, enunciated most clearly in George Kennan's seminal, 8,000-word telegram to the US State Department in 1946.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:04:40](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NZkOcxIoFrnMqjNDRw7Tsco71zgZ2Q7PXM4XgVTnOVy8e6fPuMjFcJFSaPxC6xF5_uqZWlWJ-QmK4UHdPtU8w7NjWL8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=280.4) It is a challenge that we can and will overcome. But it's time that we all get on the same page about what it means, what is required of us in order to confront it, and how our lives will drastically change as a result. Today's conversation is meant to help you do precisely that. So, without any further ado, here is that conversation with my guest, journalist and author, Josh Rogin.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:05:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jELJ7q_GWqYpjKyFiT5NDw-foFLi_xwstn6WX8vU1tFQAocJDHsw6fmKetL8eGCMTcViyhW7FeLrhnStqPoCml6Tc2I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=310.8) Josh Rogin, welcome to Hidden Forces.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:05:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kur7GqEXfjIUqOCdsctYMLTCCW61NkKuSKNuHRPIT-4QA4Fqmo0YgeMWy5R-5c9E8_3XRMn8HAmaTIPL-LSZcZjanIY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=313.84) Great to be with you.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:05:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2msHicyAMWgPH3m4jVJiAeTd7wdDqswdYbF8ZkEpBwiD7jUr9AVvu-oaQpEWB74sakd7JVE8eZZmjW-ILeY9nl2hRfY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=315.18) The pleasure is all mine Josh. Not to be confused with Joe Rogan or any-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:05:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fvvfmLuZqe8TX0UImU8tnRHfHtQqCvv9o2u5vkMgfBY6DosVmUgXsvvfyYGw1z-V47hdrO_MoF6nwKeKkZ1_Q33X5aU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=318.99) No relation.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:05:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=13NFlk2Rodwpv3VESbh4VO_6GJL9mjL6FbZwqHhW2cLWIdgoJF5g1dOFluTcl8C0Twe9J6EOaD-NiwFJXeOQFa9Oz_o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=319.68) -there's no relation whatsoever.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:05:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=I8NVVYbltTzMmRVsAivSL3BzD3uKegs_AIIdRw5fXBEF_Klz27y58zgon9lhzNtOOTlIYPIrM0SxD6Zf296GcljbKIE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=320.89) No relation to Seth Rogin, although I do have a cousin named Seth Rogin, but it's not the Seth Rogin you're thinking of but he's also a very funny guy. Shout out to Seth Rogin.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:05:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RIbx2A07jZdIDA0RKBXfQz7voxc8laKFlFuGQI-OFgHTID4Il7hHOhTJuNDV1HQLbN6zwqw7mDgem3yCc85kZPOlrks&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=329.26) Yes. But also, so are you. You uh, I strongly recommend to anyone ... First of all, a lot of people will be like wait, Josh Rogin ... Yes, it's that Josh Rogin who crushed it on Joe Rogan's podcast recently. A phenomenal episode that millions of people heard breaking down how the CCP operates, influence operations, talking about the Wuhan Institute of Virology, the lab leak hypothesis. All sorts of stuff that we're going to get into today. But Josh, before we do any of that, how did the idea for this book come about? Explain for people what the reference to "chaos under heaven," which is the title of the book, what that reference is to.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:06:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=d4cJohWs-7haNkw6Adg7nbJTnyXU1wAwfV6k8MkzU0o9taa2L_plDG18GuuyKO0K8atVYmUiT0J_talSc7JpCq1rGD4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=365.76) Right. Well, it seemed to me that in the world of sinology and the study of US-China relations, it became over time a very insular and sort of closed discussion amongst a very small group of people, especially the China watching community and Washington and that this led to some sort of broad sort of, I won't say neglect, but some sort of unawareness amongst various parts of American society about the growing and changing nature of the challenge posed by China's rise, the Chinese government's and the Chinese Communist Party's activities especially outside of its own borders. And when I came to the Washington Post in June of 2016, it was very clear already that the biggest foreign policy story of the Trump administration was going to be Russia, Russia, Russia. At the Washington Post they had dozens of people working on that Russiagate story. And it's not as if I didn't work on it. I covered Russia as well, but it seemed clear to me that I wasn't going to be able to compete with 25 to 30 amazing Washington Post national security reporters who were covering Russiagate like a glove.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:07:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AeMideNvCRZzNx1pZYhFGRshU2Nhe7zLfdCGF-Au3A1mx18U6qYt82osQIwiIfq-g3ZOlrx3lK6IgvWmaJzcr7qEfvM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=435.65) So, I went to my bosses and I said to my boss Fred Hyatt, who's the editorial editor of the Washington Post, I said, "Hey, I want to do something different." "What do you want to do?" I said, "I want to work on the China story." And he said, "What do you need?" And I said, "Well, what I need is the time and space and resources to report out a very difficult, complex story. It's going to require a lot of travel. It's going to require me not spending a lot of time writing about Russiagate." And he said okay. And he bought into it. And he trusted me to go out and spend my time and his resources on reporting the story. I knew it was going to be a crazy story. I didn't know exactly what it was going to be. And of course, it was even crazier than I thought because the Trump administration was so crazy and it was disruptive at its core and it was very complicated and a tough nut to crack because the traditional reporter source relationships that existed in Washington were basically useless. The influx of a different crowd of people in Washington flipped over the chessboard and that made the reporting very challenging.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:08:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=5McBChxHeEpT5Vl3LTriWTPuHw5AQMBWwWoI7pAirvqK_PiPbwU9v6FTGAVwD5QlKU_UZ2IlGoG0OfmjJ8srdQfDSFU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=495.82) And then when it came to the China issue in particular, it got very nasty inside the administration very quickly and the factions formed and there was a scandal when Trump took a call from Taiwanese president Tsai Ing-wen during the transition and we were off to the races. And so, all I did was try to be where the other guy ain't and watch the US-China relationship as closely as I could and report it out as much as I could until it became obvious to most people at least in Washington and in journalism, that this was going to be a big story and that the US-China relationship was quickly becoming the most important bilateral relationship in the world.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:08:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0qokOQqIr8Lqiy7Un6INdprC8YScFdas42jOr525KUivTHSHyz2talvyOsEhojf3ec-meMcE5fUeGVDTQ1M9G66ieRk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=531.4) And then what became increasingly obvious to me was that this was an issue that now mattered to all Americans. Really to all people on earth because the Chinese government and the Chinese Communist Party's actions were no longer confined to government to government relations and that they were increasingly interfering in American and international institutions of all kinds. In our schools, in our campuses, in our markets, in our Silicon Valley tech companies, in our politics, in our sports, and in our Hollywood movies. And nobody was connecting all of those dots and nobody was taking the very insular discussion about the US-China relationship that was happening in Washington and connecting it to all of these similar discussions that were siloed in different parts of American society.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:09:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qEmOb4y6L5hQmlPaw049uRduYrZeLsFEFFR6oa5FJWVVuD6Hs8E5hVRd6QQQ3WUsPMtt18ToRX-xE_8Ix9m-Dv8_0LA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=575.26) I mean there were a few to be sure, but not a lot. And so that's how I started to connect all of those dots. That was around the same time that the Trump administration and the US law enforcement and national security committee started going out to all of these institutions and trying to get on the same page with them and it didn't go well. Because again, the Trump administration made a lot of mistakes and they were very disorganized and they had a lot of in fighting. That to me was just a super interesting story and that was how I got the book contract but that was before the pandemic hit. And then when the pandemic hit, all doubt was removed in the minds of most Americans and all citizens in the world that all of a sudden what happens in Beijing doesn't stay in Beijing and we can debate how much but if you're sitting in your house in 2020 and worried about getting coronavirus you knew that to some degree that decisions and policies that were made in Beijing affected you. Affected you in your life. And we saw huge awakenings in countries all over the world to the reality of a Chinese Communist Party that's increasingly repressive, increasingly aggressive and increasingly interfering in western and free and open societies. All societies really but in ways that affect our lives and ways that we can't simply just ignore.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:10:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CS3JMTFPiepdHuPn26iIuRSsqs8FHxQCWi-JvNNSowXg1O-yUEFmegXz0lCc5mLaPtMFJ_Kk8-QCg2vS1IAIOv-SBQM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=643.46) And the chaos under heaven is a quote from Mao Zedong which actually we couldn't really prove he ever said it but it's widely attributed to him. The quote is something like, "There is great chaos under heaven. The situation is excellent." And what Mao was commenting on was the fact that the organization amongst his enemies was good for him and his allies. And that's what the Trump administration was. It was a mess. It was a disaster bureaucratically. A confusion laden enigma politically. And Trump, while he had very well formed over years and years and years, well-formed ideas about the US-China relationship which manifested themselves in US policy during his tenure, he had no idea about tactics and he had no idea about the business of running government and the art of diplomacy. That's why it got all screwed up and he was a terrible tactician. And so that was a lot of chaos. It was just a ton of chaos. And a lot of that redounded to Beijing's benefit.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:11:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jvn_ikCX0ALsLXSH8dsXhpYCSUKfictLjusosnTNmhAOUJlQmDkiHcOwrpqzfqW2najYWy2J_0BciBOWYJRhvc2gG58&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=706.5) Yeah. So, we're going to get into the Trump administration also because you spent a good amount of time in the book. It wasn't primarily about the Trump administration but of course Trump played a huge role both as a disrupter in pivoting US foreign policy and being a catalyst for getting the American people and the public behind this idea of strategic competition with China. However ungracefully. Also, we're going to get into something else which you kind of touch on. Something that's helped me over the years understand the Chinese Communist Party is by looking at its roots as this underground influence organization. This insurgency. This gorilla organization. But before we do any of that, you mentioned awakenings. Now you wrote in your book that everyone you interviewed for the book had an awakening story. A moment in their personal or professional lives where they realized that the grand strategic competition according to you between the United States and China was "the most important foreign policy issue on the world and the most important project they would work on in their lifetime". This really resonated with me. Because I've had a similar awakening over the course of doing this podcast having interviewed over 20 people on this program and investigating the economy, the political system, the history, et cetera, of China and the Chinese Communist Party. What was your awakening story?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:13:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uQl03gIfbRB1l8QdoBGsXy2GobjdJ1bUsNz8ssSLF1Tig6gpBUDYSk1JPiAoM1ICzFa9BOA6LhRcuZQsJF-g7vNZk9o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=789.52) Right. Right. So, this idea of an awakening can be sort misconstrued by especially people in the China hand ivory tower academic community who will say and who have said in response to my claim that there was a broad national awakening, "What are you talking about? We've been dealing with this challenge of a rising China for 50 years." And what you'll find in the China hand community is sort of three schools of thought. One is that this broad project of engagement and cooperation and integration of modern China into our systems, into our lives, into our international institutions. I'm simplifying it to be sure. But the idea, the bet that the west had that if we just engage China and integrated them as much as possible, that they would liberalize economically and then that would in turn lead them to inevitably liberalize politically and that would in turn solve all of our problems and that's the solution for avoiding the confrontation, the Thucydides Trap or whatever other bumper sticker moniker you want to put on the idea that the threat of a rising China needed to be mitigated by just hugging them as close as possible and wishing for the best.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:14:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HojMEQN18788W2rCa8yt52K-Uju8batJC29RZ3tf8v-eQDDlt2gLFWjkixbgBZ1ANOYN2BNKz41Cwf6stat2uENClBo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=858.26) Again, I'm simplifying it to be sure. But one school of thought is that that was the only responsible course to take in those years and China just decided to go another way. Now there was another school of thought at the time that said no. Actually, the character and history and actions and behavior of the Chinese Communist Party indicates that that's not going to work. But over the course of decades those people inside the China hand community were largely marginalized frankly. And then the third school of thought is that actually that's still the right thing to do now and you'll see a lot of people in the China hand community say, "Well, that's still the only responsible way to go about it." But what I experienced as a reporter in Washington for the last 17 years was that there was a generational turnover going on in our town and in our institutions and that the young China hands were not young anymore. I'm 42 years old. I'm decidedly middle aged. But at that time 20 years ago, they weren't bought into that bet. They had no allegiance to it one way or the other because they weren't around when that bet was made.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:15:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=cfakMfeqxWWGvKOcnGvhZmOmaqOElxLKm2GAgtOuKOxhQRCZ5Dr3jfI3d1T-3Gxjj5dRVszzysOT9MD8m8F2TFbFLXY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=919.02) The young China hands didn't have this experience of going through the '80s and the '90s when a whole effort to convince the west that this was actually a bet worth making and they saw China for what it was, not what the older Asia hands wanted it to or wanted to say it would become. And that led to a generation of Asia hands ... They didn't agree on everything but they had a lot less disagreement about the prognosis than about the solutions. For me and admittedly, I'm not a China hand, I studied Japanese. I don't speak Chinese. I'm just a journalist just trying to report out the story. My awakening came even before I was a journalist because I was living in Japan and traveling around Asia and I traveled to China a couple of times and I had come back to Washington and I was trying to become a lawyer and I was working as a paralegal at a law firm and we were suing the government of Sudan for genocide. This was 2003.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:16:13](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=BEHiKl0hQtqmYPTPCgteMmJecjdrXzewwRV1Km5fTQnDXqP4LFeHiAmjBwWwcpeYeRgaJGfbEU9c3J705ikyzIr8FU8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=973) It was a Philadelphia law firm that specialized in using what's called the Alien Tort Claims Act, which allows anybody to sue a foreign government for actions committed abroad in the American legal system. And this firm, Berger Montague, had used this to seek justice for a number of international historical atrocities including the stealing of billions of dollars’ worth of wealth from holocaust victims, et cetera. And their new target was the government of Sudan which was in the process and still is in a way, of committing genocide against various minority populations in what was then southern Sudan. Anyway, long story short, I was the paralegal on this case and I was pouring through the documents and I found all of these state department cables which talked about China's actions in what was then southern Sudan and the actions were extensive and multifaceted. And basically, what they had done is they had combined military aid and diplomatic aid and economic aid and oil extraction and business in a way that now it seems ubiquitous but in 2003 those stories were less told and really hard to nail down and basically what they were doing is that they were helping the government of Sudan perpetrate the genocide in a number of evil ways. And the state department cable sort of laid it out and I wrote an op-ed about it with my friend Joshua Eisenman, who was then a think tank guy at the New America Foundation.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:17:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=3FH8k2PFQDYX-9lmfuGuGW26zJC-O4g0okgfo9UG555kJxcdD_gLjEAwvpOgdaQlQKlO62rWU2czeZXwnLtzFEr9goI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1055.44) And two things happened. I basically almost got fired from my job as a paralegal because I wasn't supposed to be publishing about the case. And also, I got noticed by a Japanese newspaper, the Asahi Shimbun, because they saw that story and they asked me for an interview and I got a job as a reporter and three weeks later I was back in Washington and I was the pentagon reporter for the Japanese newspaper. So, the awakening for me at least was that here was a Chinese government and a Chinese Communist Party that was combining economic, diplomatic, military, industrial policy, not only in a sort of elegant and comprehensive way to make these pitches to countries all over the world that they should accept the package that included all sorts of things. Including corruption, including slave labor coming from China to build the oil infrastructure including building the roads and then shipping them the illicit arms. Lots and lots and lots of bad stuff. That was part of it but it was also the fact that we didn't have some sort of policy that accounted for any of that. I saw that sort of present itself in US government and congress for the first time over the few years and the mid aughts and then gradually over the last 20 years in more and more parts of American society.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:18:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j2G69uzLUITTDWaelup0kpqDzxxFSYbAlie599nFRFAK0omRk3MHqnTgD1SbB_mesYaFf0B0Rf_v6BxG265azNfm2vk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1129.96) Then when I started to write the book I started to look at all these campuses and these Silicon Valley tech companies and these Wall Street firms to a degree. And even some of these sports leagues and Hollywood studios. And you could find people who were having similar awakenings, who were sort of coming to this notion that hey, we've got a problem here. And that this bet on the CPP liberalizing is not working out for whatever reason, whoever you want to blame. And they're not liberalizing. And actually, their actions are getting more, not only nefarious and destructive for the people that they're aimed at, but also more threatening to our interests and they're increasingly exerting their rising influence and power in ways that are averse to us. In other words, that the party means us harm and we have yet to respond. Not the Chinese people, not the Chinese government really, but the party. That process was very chaotic and continues to be very sort of haphazard and ad hoc.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:19:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_-n5Uj_deD1WrFDRf5xUzEl4338DaI69L2gl-880IEE3znxqqjjAvKoAc2ZJUg0NR9OxwP7C3lfEAxfpc6dZLyewyZc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1187.14) Although now I think at least we're, after the pandemic, a horrible tragedy that affects us all, one of the very small silver linings is that every person in the world now knows that the actions and the decisions and policies of the CCP can affect them in their lives very negatively in fact and in fact that what happened. So, I think now the awakening is complete but that doesn't get us to what we have to do about it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:20:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-DsnwXi7MruGMPhe69l3Z4xcGCcK6u04thgvjGWqnnBIOM1wrAq3c0O5GuqQ2Gp8gTPhr8wN1ieT4rAOltjyZeIW07Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1211.92) Yeah. What's interesting though is there's still a large constituency of well off sort of internationalists so to speak, successful entrepreneurs and businesspeople, who are bending over backwards not only to apologize on behalf of the CCP and some of their more egregious policies like, for example, what's going on in Xinjiang. No one actually suggests that ... Well, I don't know anyone that's tried to suggest that what's happening there is okay. But there's a constituency of folks that are consistently sort of saying, well what about America? What about all the horrible things that we've done in Iraq, slavery, genocide of Native Americans? And in fact, the Chinese Communist Party is very competent. China's economy has grown by leaps and bounds over the course of several decades. I've been sort of amazed at the residence of that message. I'm curious to ask you a bit later maybe where that comes from. But just to wrap up this larger question of about awakenings, do we know if Donald Trump has an awakening at any point and what that might have been?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:21:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=79l-iiUHiwemXCrnR_VzPAk6rc5xN9tH8lWeZahi8NvuOcnnZCLGReXGsYTxfkC2gN7YdNC6GE-ilHDgXWRvV9b4wQk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1274.74) That's a good question. That's a great question. I'll answer both of your questions right now. Let me answer the Trump one first. So, I read every book that Donald Trump professed to have written or at least the China sections over the last 30 years. And he had a very consistent, an amazingly consistent view on China and the US-China relationship which was very hawkish and focused on his belief that the Chinese government had been screwing us over on trade and economics and industrial policy this whole time which is, by the way, largely true. He was also very hawkish on human rights. But again, that didn't carry over into his presidency. But the bottom line is that as far as the economic competition and the economic warfare goes, Donald Trump was an early adapter. He was actually way ahead of the curve in talking about a lot of these things. At least whoever wrote his books was. But the problem was that when he got into office, he handed over the economic policy to people who you're mentioning. People were not only invested in the system and some were actually corrupted in the system, but basically had not come to the conclusion that national security concerns should be taken into consideration at all when doing business with the CCP and that the business of America is business and they didn't understand really that the Chinese Communist Party didn't see it that way.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:22:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8Op8hCZNgb_5qHafAkML1pRYt-HbIDqjZt6u9NW66OR382gqDh5nJ18MRtv6WnZaFnRhGks_-xqbmwKDEDnwTpV5J20&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1356.97) That Xi Jinping increasingly placing the party's interest and the ideological struggle that he talks about often in his own papers, in his own remarks, above the economic and industrial policy. Now we see that a lot. But for the first years of the Trump administration that wasn't the agreed upon analysis, at least not by most. And Donald Trump also very foolishly believed that he had a very close personal friendship and relationship with Xi Jinping which Xi Jinping used to manipulate the president of the United States on a number of occasions to ask for favors. Because he knew that if he asked Donald Trump for a favor, Trump would grant it and he called upon him to grant those favors liberally and that had another horrible destructive effect on our policy and that especially manifested itself in the beginning months of the coronavirus pandemic when President Xi, according to my book, lied to President trump about it, said it would go away in warm weather, said herbal medicine could treat it, said they had it under control. And Trump believed him and this led to Trump repeating these lies, although not attributing them to his good friend Xi Jinping, to the American public and it also led to the muddle in Trump's mind which led to the garble that came out of his mouth which led to the mess of the policy that exacerbated the suffering of every American.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:23:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RPOoLMo_180L2H9CN2gl6s6o4o-tyTpBx9aLieSg5Y69cIFMyE4bXlMavPZfTK_MVLWJGP4-4AydZXx0GDYSQB65kko&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1435.76) Yes. Eventually he realized that Xi Jinping was lying to him. He realized that they weren't friends. He realized that the trade deal was not going to get made in any way that was going to fix any of the other structural problems. He cut a bad trade deal. Bad for China and bad for the United States just to get some points on the board ahead of his election. By the time the pandemic was really in full swing, it was in Trump's political interest to bash China as much as possible and also to combine his China bashing with a lot of cruel racist comments that exacerbated the hate and violence against Asian Americans which is a tragedy and a stain on our society. So, yeah, he did realize it but it was way too late. It was way too late. And by the time he had done that it was too late both to do anything really about it from his point of view but also it was too late to save his presidency because he had screwed up the pandemic and he will never be forgiven for that in my view now.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:24:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8UlJbpF3sUkuUmdFle9kAurWg1ohwRTaOPFpC9MCur8IOoV0_Jxinex8eUWCYJgQjHpZexn5lp85X1DXDBgYMTGoTm0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1488.43) A couple of things that you said. Okay, the arguments against what I'm arguing which should be engaged honestly. What about America? Haven't we made mistakes? This is the pretty much textbook example of false equivalence. Of course, it's the exact line pushed by Beijing all the time. That's why Chinese state counselor Yang Jiechi when he met with Tony Blinken and Jake Sullivan in Anchorage, said, "What about Black Lives Matter? How can you tell us about Xinjiang when you've been slaughtering black people in America?" That's what he said. Now of course that-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:25:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_DEI0EufnIAn8_bRvWUmYa7jgfDjMuj8DFxBmxpbf2KBS09U-0PUwPIRR2G5piw4iNaLJEU7TRrprnDqIJcMSe1JhI4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1520.45) No comparison.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:25:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=FoAMLgEbzfANKiHpGdBKpnveuwIC-7Da7TyP79XCvnEaUZytOF8dNvnH0PoeLr9PWP2yhvSWKWpbdaSKsykkR5hzhAo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1521.62) It's a false equivalence.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:25:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wJHKpnb6xSzLMsRLuCUsPAJTM9ntPPz_Pb6lkR9jiO9WVb4fJ6Cj1uBdR8YAzRJmiA3p43q4YLC2_tkaSWWAfI3st5Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1523.18) No comparison what's so ever.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:25:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=14erViRIhVZNlagoO6W8ydw8mdFGUXO8WdOVQ8W7UUfsD4DeAfnbVmIpVOHQpiiyVxcnJLP4aCniNbsk1fazUHxF1Wg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1524.07) That doesn't justify our ... And what Tony Blinken said, which I think is the only thing you could say is, "Yes, we have problems but we talk about them openly and we strive for a better society. It's imperfect but the beauty of democracy is that it can be self-correcting in the best instances."

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:25:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=19m6vzbCpEFeXq3GxBvC-01GNqFElW9V4pWEkibSN28kvxuGwhQ_CQeqpat7AQoE5IG397caCRJFmw2VZSEvk3n5q1A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1538.09) We're not forcibly harvesting organs from minorities within the continental United States.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:25:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xh3gvKhzOb6S9BF0_7A1oQQ3-emu-BNaPqe-mbNU3VZwoOGOyx3U4p-B853WOo3_zYe9RKo-6BJQfgQ3Sa0aon6jz9s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1541.57) Right. Or shaving the heads of thousands of women and sending the hair abroad for sale. It's Godwin's Law is that every political discussion eventually devolves into some sort of reference to the holocaust. But hey, if the shoe fits what else can I think when I see them sending 17,000 tons of human hair to us and demanding that we put it on our heads and then crying foul if we dare not to do that. Mass forced sterilization. Mass interment. Mass indoctrination. Mass shipping of orphans, the children of the concentration camp victims to other places. Mass forced labor. This is some pretty horrendous stuff when you think about it. It is a mass atrocity. And then the other part of the sort of wicked, pernicious genocide denialism that you see around town these days and around the world ... Again, these are messages put out by the communist party and amplified by its friends. And this gets to your core question which is sort of the nature of the Chinese Communist Party and a big focus of the book is the united front. And the united front is the part of the Chinese Communist Party, not the government, the party, that is meant to implement the party's wishes through force or bribery or coercion or whatever with anyone who's not in the party. And they deal with the Uyghur issue, they deal with overseas Chinese, they also deal with foreigners like us.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:27:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NMByytdLoF1_5sZmF7fPpKg5IoVjXDAJg4aEXKTBG6DySPw_b_3JZPwEqaWwYquR7XNqY9yp9cACvIL7dTMpzDoO4Ek&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1623.26) And the idea is to strike at the party's enemies using the party's friends. The united front system again, dates back to the Maoist struggle and it's baked into the DNA of the party and they use it through proxies all over the world. So, what I try to do is ... Because tracing the money is a very complicated and difficult thing because there's so much money. And all efforts to trace it have been sort of minuscule compared to just the waves and waves and waves of billions of dollars of cash coming from the party through its proxies into institutions of all kinds. And that's not even counting the billionaires who just do party favors because they have huge business in China and that's a part of the problem. But what I'm trying to get to here is that if you want to know who's doing the party's bidding, you trace the messages. Look at their official feeds and their state propaganda and whatever the Chinese ambassador in France is saying which is always some horrendous stuff by the way. And then you see who else is saying those exact same things. That's how you trace the influence networks. That's the only way I've found that's useful to do it.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:28:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Feu7XhNJgTrtNuzAHsqVKPzamKnuklfrweElXEu27QSf8TMBd8-Bp7YjppPkgafIrv34rt63R-myu4S_12bQrhBHgRg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1682.46) And what you find is that they'll say, first is the false equivalence argument, then it's sort of the idea of democracy is bad. The idea of the enlightenment and the idea that we as human beings, not just Americans, have a responsibility, in fact a duty to advocate for and push for dignity and human rights and universal rights for all human beings no matter which border they happen to have unluckily found themselves born inside. And that is for me, and we can get into this more if you want, core to the idea of America. In other words, it's a feature, not a bug of our country. That America wasn't founded with justice and liberty for Americans. It was founded based on the idea of equality, justice and liberty for all. And that if you read back in that ... This is a settled question. But if you read back to our founding fathers and our founding documents that they had this exact debate and that I side with the founding fathers and documents that advocate for ... That as Americans, the American experiment which is the idea that rights are enjoyed by all humans. Not just kings, not just queens. That if they have rights, we have rights. That that idea is not confined to people who happen to be living inside of our country and the only way for that idea to survive is for it eventually to prevail.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:29:23](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GckkZWnJF-YPcYehw2EPmmpCNj8fjxnbCPfS3HdjfYEfQE0J4ZqoCbOs4mCy-0SDuAZ5n5dyRzZSaAItd7Qxrmh4MbI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1763.78) And that dictatorships and totalitarian systems and ... What did Thomas Paine say? "Hereditary rulers make no more sense than hereditary mathematicians." And so that idea is something that I believe in but even if you set that aside for a second, you will realize that the system that the Chinese have put into place is, on the level of mass atrocities that we haven't seen in quite some time. And the latest pernicious genocide denial is quibbling with the definition of genocide. In other words, the legal definition. This was a controversial thing because again, it's chaos. In the last week on the very last day of the administration, secretary of state Mike Pompeo put out a statement declaring that the Uyghur atrocities amounted to a genocide. Tony Blinken on his confirmation confirmed that. Which I think as the descendant of holocaust victims he honestly believes. But even some people inside the state department quibbled with the technical legal justification. And my belief is that genocides don't always include gas chambers. They don't always include machetes and church yards. Some genocides are slow. In other words, some genocides take place over time. And it's clear to me at least from what I've read and seen in the people that I've interviewed, that the goal, the intent of the atrocities is to over time slowly destroy the Uyghur identity and nationality and culture and religion and language. And I think there's just a huge pile of evidence to that effect.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:31:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9oc4q1PQgIpLJnweBnR6UgQebgaoJnr0VQrD0bWTseWKD2QiB2DRAigbugxzDb9Qu_u6_ADJplkgw3zJIe70GF-nBWI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1860.71) So I think that the people who are denying that are wrong and that gets to the last part of your question which is why are they doing this? Why are these people doing this? And I think different ones are doing it for different reasons. I've met billionaires, actual billionaires who are very prominent in the China debate who say, "Listen, they've got 1.4 billion people. We've got 300 million people. They've got a bigger army. What are you going to do? If you can't beat them, join them. It's inevitable that China and the CCP will be the most powerful organization in the world and we've got to make our peace with that. And if that means we can't tweet about Hong Kong then so be it." I happen to think that's kind of a disgusting thing to say. But that's how some people really believe. Some people are on the take. Some people are corrupted.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:31:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=gHB3QuyJlnR-dL3WFVS-47ICmXKj-ir_vKJ82v5HnHzmevGL8VxOtrMfvumuCVr_hvB-ES8KfstdK4nMAjE82iInEYw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1906.68) Oh. You list a number of those people. Elaine Chao, the former transportation secretary and wife of senate majority leader Mitch McConnell was probably the most flagrant example. And I'm sure we'll talk about that later when we get into a more detailed conversation about corruption. But you said so many things just now Josh. And one of them reminded me of something that you said on Joe Rogan's podcast, which was that the overarching objective of a Chinese Communist Party is to make the world safe for totalitarianism and autocracy. And that's something that I think can help listeners in pursuit of that aha moment. Because the Chinese Communist Party is a fundamentally illegitimate organization by the standards of western democratic society. How we think about parties. They're illegitimate. They have no popular mandate. They have to hit targets. They have to achieve certain objectives and they are insecure on the international stage in particular because they live in a world dominated by western open liberal institutions.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:32:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PVC7FGr7ircr5ewsxw1IPLfbXvlYoDHq8V4Xb628rMieYqgewKX31oDOtbIgBBudP3DRaIIECMrvmDQHt9uyDfWrZtw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1971.49) I think what would help here would be to give listeners an idea really of how the Chinese Communist Party sees the world and how it operates. And I think one really great way to do that is something that you did in the book because you brought up George Kennan's long telegram. Listeners are familiar with George Kennan. He was an ambassador to the Soviet Union. And he wrote famously the Sources of Soviet Conduct. That was the name that was published later in the Foreign Affairs Magazine. But the telegram left the embassy in 1946. It was an 8,000 word telegram that spelled out in incredibly sophisticated detail, exactly that. The sources of soviet conduct. Who is this enemy that Americans at the time weren't really seeing it as an enemy? Of course, FDR had still held out hopes that he would be able to have a fruitful post war relationship with Stalin. And it turned out that that was not possible. And George Kennan's letter is sort of held up as ... It's one of the core historical documents that you can study in US foreign policy. We haven't had anything exactly similar yet in the United States. We did have something that reminded me a bit of that, which was Pompeo's speech at the Nixon Centre shortly before the end of the Trump administration.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:34:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QwgXtvrwo0ThpkUqmshfSnqBjhFCLj_9inDjnUuu3-m1DhqQQaeqbYUk6e5ljNYd-gQ6Ta-bbp8ZGymBOcpluMFlAA4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2046.71) Of course, he borrowed from some existing literature because there has been a community of people that have been fighting this war. But if George Kennan was around today ... Maybe I can ask it this way. If he was here today, how would he describe the Chinese Communist Party's strategy in 2021?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:34:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=fQegJLBDVX4p3r5SmZGQH9jY7uGjTthkxb8wOjwf3lbSU4cDPqxgAQqacatXSUBB9fekblpKGAWEKYpRpd74i3zEQ8s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2065.03) Right. Okay. A couple good questions. So, first about the idea that what I said on the Joe Rogan show which is that the Chinese Communist Party's goal is to create a world safe for autocracy and repression. I believe that deserves a little bit explanation. Basically, what I was arguing, and this is also in the book, is that if you just read what Xi Jinping has said and written ... My friends in the intelligence community always say that the Chinese Communist Party has a great encryption system. They just put things in their own language and then we never know about them. So, if you just read that stuff. And I would start with document number nine which was Xi Jinping's ... One of his original edicts which was later-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:35:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=F3R1qyrGXEJqDxa_eLxW_hN_txDLIMHfn6kO1JIfDO8F4qHLw3uU5ezOi_Uhvcr2q0Ey1seqfbwouGsPvfk3-hOMxLw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2107.26) Is this part of Xi Jinping Thought? Is this considered-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:35:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IOi6uvcr1DG-ZYCvZ6Q-AA5LrtNj4R0_xhzJZ42OiKz9qRfQ3xrfQmWtrhl3vrgNR7I1-y7BWd1ZU3eIDRecNu_We4k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2109.58) It is. This is one of the foundational documents of Xi Jinping Thought. Although, this was an internal secret CCP document that was later leaked and then they disappeared the guy who leaked it. Basically, what it says is that the Chinese Communist Party believes that it's in an existential international struggle, ideological struggle with the west. And that these western notions, ideas, institutions, organizations including but not limited to, the western media, western civil society, international constructs of all kind are all ways that the west seeks to attack and intimidate and imperialize China. That they're all threats to China and they're all threats to the party and they all must be opposed and on all fronts. In other words, what he wrote down is a clear refutation of the idea that China wants to join our, whatever you want to call it. Liberal international world order, multilateral system. Whatever phrase you like to use for the network, the universe of institutions, customs and norms that we've built up in conjunction with our partners since World War II for better or worse, that China wasn't seeking to change itself to accommodate them. That it was actually seeking to change them to accommodate China.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:36:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Hfcn8UBDAV_Nf2QFyWeMkUo9yuKCGpymTJ85Km2Ul3fswhmPWzxtxXfR2zSf9TQEvhpkLhyaIf_cXzTWIACmaHrJMvY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2191.49) By the way, if you just look through history, sort of an inescapable pattern of all totalitarian pseudo religious expansionist systems is that eventually they perceive any outside disagreement as a threat to their internal control. I may disagree with you about their level of control inside China. I happen to think that it ... Based on what I have been able to report from inside China, which is not a complete report to be sure, that their control over that country is actually very secure and that they use technology and-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:37:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AK4w7aClBOBfnMtrwG7oggTrKhYcefg3sN59hiKtgIXAgfX6QmRiZ54goy89EHees5uKmqH-eT4hVX-em_ctsKT26no&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2224.31) Well, let me just clarify something because I think it's important. I want to make sure we're both clear on what the other person means. When I talk about insecurity ... And maybe you're correct. Maybe they are secure. But my sense is in the broader sense that you could have a low volatility environment. For example, the Saudi government. Saudi Arabia can have a clamp down on the kingdom but the country is unstable in a way that let's say, Italy is not. Italy may have electoral volatility-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:37:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WKfk9NbAdkEiWExQ3GjZXgI-RhE4Mo01k2C84r3miq9zUchK5nB1U8LSR9j5yvuq4IelN7w0yBybhQtJZQIT6KHJWHQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2251.29) Yeah, I'm with you.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:37:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OaupuxMq4UbnoygRjVRTOlaEqmQy7vYkSilhGUqcait_70W1ipVkSBG6cjSzT4M78iZjz_82zULQaZLxb67WTST8seA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2251.74) And so-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:37:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6Qx-ra6KQqyizFI2FkShiiMkZqOqmzLq9ACl0yQoTKklEDhdAuJfKzpstzKQUFXQbX5MZV49uDqAvkEGw13uR-vSQLA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2251.93) There's an inherent instability into ruling with the fist and to having what essentially is a Mafia organization running a country.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:37:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bYGxEBdQIFROQohDHLIYgC91URRLhSPigmFkGpHM1wc3M1iCIYCu0F8V-T1WbanGV5MfW-xUr02bWC8uaNBJJZ_1dGs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2259.01) Exactly correct.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:37:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dkNLvSu4jrdpwnwf1W9fMmOPCA0BA0xPtWDXqP-0QGDoCIE2L3yhJNbmtmlyn3TwbdI98wnD8jHL6r6Bvb-GlKDoVQw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2259.8) It's a massive protection racket. It's like oh, you got nice company there. It'd be a shame if something happened to it.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:37:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XuBR8QOGvpbgyMZS2yQ-fo2DW6k7W30av_euh_g1GPTU5sPGVoQyh4r9tJphZ-tfgk6UERLQKu1xZBd4ZkqnG5x9JWU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2264.36) And in fact, that's how it operates. But go ahead. You were talking about how secure it is. Continue.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:37:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=h1py54x0crM74mKHierIQ4CNPRKNDm9g7JVCzhKmJzR92zf3rRPJpV_bX-_gcwPaT1QEyCgXdvuNuvwo3-xxZ4ZIkC0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2268.15) Right. So, the insecurity is in Xi Jinping killing all of his rivals and purging and purging and purging until there's not one person left who can say anything bad about the policy even inside the system. That is a core insecurity. But the insecurity internationally is the idea that any criticism, any sort of even minor objection to any of their policies, even the most horrendous ones, even the genocides, that they regard as an attack on their core existence and core ideology. And they overreact and over respond. This is what happened with the NBA. It happened with Nike. It happened with H & M. it happens almost every day. To make the world safe for autocracy means, they have to neuter all of the institutions and organizations in the world that could confront any of their bad behavior. Including the civil society. Including the moral leadership of the United States and other western democracies, damaged as it is.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:38:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=JI0eF6KSOdqeL06_OJuINsXW-xfYX3QRE0cnHFawzgAVyxSUr5y9iDMDVRoqx7a6lf6HRzGVRUQPJy5-VL_GtSY5N14&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2318.86) So just to highlight something there again, because the challenge here for me is I want to make sure that people really have that aha moment here. Because people look at things like Daryl Morey, the Houston Rockets GM or the case of H & M where they basically put on the website, we're curious, we're going to look into whether some of our clothing is made by slave labor. And the CCP freaks out and basically shuts down their entire business in China. People see that and they have a hard time wrapping their head around that level of sensitivity and insecurity. How much of that, bringing it back to what I said early on, stems from the history of the CCP as this underground influence organization where so much of how they conduct warfare is actually informational warfare? Propaganda and creating a PR spin that allows them to basically conduct a strategy of strategic envelopment. I see the CCP as a sort of boa constrictor. They slither very slowly around their prey and gently squeeze until there's really nothing left. And that's been the strategy up until now. Up until very recently. But I think the Trump administration and Xi Jinping, that's where the gloves came off and now, they're sort of going for it.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:39:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XP5BWca_f_Ws_XFvuEGvNv6sWp8ASeanLZ-f1YWiouiWfrYeSzWxa6-THqovMscSGqDRdGsbjiGOjm3er3QLldugams&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2389.22) Right. Right. Right. Yeah. I think you're right. I think what a lot of Americans can understand is propaganda. We see propaganda and we get it and we can account for it. Then a lot of Americans understand espionage. We know what spying is and stealing is. And then over the course of the Trump administration, Americans began to understand what political interference was, but they understood it in the Russian context which is very clanky. Like Facebook groups and trolls and stuff and they were interfering in our ... Not to say that we got it at the time but now we can sort of see how a Russian influenced operation works, which is its military driven, it's organized, it's really aimed at both sides and it's really meant to disrupt our confidence in our discourse. It's information warfare in a hybrid sense but it's not necessarily as nefarious as what the Chinese Communist Party has been doing which is a level of influence peddling and sewing its own influence into our institutions that no one's ever contemplated. And that's the bleeding edge of it.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:40:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WlxSxXunghoJH4ldwG9kkeLddMz0XA_tVFxOW-R32yg0Il6wk5JiQGW5_evcr3a97cLwDVcXa-KJ6Nj8ppumszUDZcw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2448.81) You want an aha moment? Think of the fact that 100 American universities had Confucius Institutes in them funded by the Hanban, which was a united front program, an influence program. Now, that's not to say all the Confucius Institutes are the same or that they're all as nefarious as the other ones. But before anyone even realized what was going on there were 100 of them. Now half of them are gone for a variety of reasons. Or think about the fact that the MSCI index, which is a massive Wall Street index which is tracked by $14 trillion of American investor money increased its holdings of Chinese companies from 2% to 5% to 7%. Now it's going up to 20%. And these are companies, including the companies that build the cameras that sit atop the concentration camp walls.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:41:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Vw_o6RlrjoA2-e0Lcjcx-lVsNGIx1j2QRW_v1IDL_YEGkkOB-7qV_DeboSgwagpyUT-sDYZIpbwm8vCKMXVLJPHSFPY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2498.55) Pike vision.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:41:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Bkl_9YGOI0fywO7vmygXlUNhRcX75n9ElV5iL6ted2mw-WnuxYNSsXPOl8Fpr6V-yalqWeypngkaXBmOvHWZOE6I10Q&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2499.17) The companies that are building the islands in the South China Sea. The companies that are building the missiles that are pointed at us. The companies that are sponsoring the cyber hackers that are attacking our companies. And when you think about the scope and scale of that kind of problem and the fact that Wall Street is shoveling American taxpayer money into these maligned Chinese companies that are committing atrocities, you realize how really far behind we are in this whole competition and how they've been running this strategy for years and years and years and we're just not responding to it. And the Trump administration took a stab at it. Because they were so disorganized they messed some of it up. And when you talk about the UN organizations it's sort of like well ... Every time while America was sort of ignoring the UN, the Chinese government decided to take over several of these organizations and in each instance, it resulted in some horrendous corruption or political manipulation. We're talking about INTERPOL and the International Aviation Organization. You wouldn't think that would be a really sensitive one but they found a way to corrupt it. And this is some really pernicious stuff and it's also the way that they advance their industrial policy.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:42:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=az6AKU47PKqF3nsd7MqruG4zWMAQdUdTI6EWnd_465-VtLbHzsuoJvXoehTQG6fkCjrUFYpN3L06ySTsjL_lQeoeTNM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2565.17) Did you know that there were 26 MOUs, memorandums of understanding, between UN organizations and China's Belt and Road Initiative? That's their $2 trillion expansion of their infrastructure and development program. It's countries all over the world. It's rife with all sorts of debt trap diplomacy and corruptions and environmental degradations. But when the Trump administration took a look at it, they realized 26 UN organizations were already working with them and nobody had any idea. Nobody was tracking it. That's the scope and scale of it. Can I get to the Kennan thing? Because the Kennan thing's really important.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:43:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=lswPv8k3SAAtwjyasENslyO_7nJCKFGQdpvzG_wNgIQ_vmYbTuylICsIo6oKvfVdPGlrT0-RWDw4pnebpWx5rANNWoQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2598.56) Oh, absolutely. Go ahead. Yeah.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:43:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_vmUTTxidtZXi69RO9ZqXd_0v72JsvKzgVABCQsCPKPxOvmm-gt9xzQJ2bRXhEzOyHg6MyyiGVJIXSL6QYZgyxBW2fI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2600.92) So this idea of Kennan is really interesting because in Washington it's like 10 times a week when we had events you would hear people invoke Kennan. "Oh, wasn't Kennan the father of the Cold War containment strategy and didn't we win the Cold War? Therefore, we need another Kennan and everyone's trying to be Kennan. And a cursory examination of history will reveal that it's a lot more complicated than that. And in fact, Kennan's long telegram and his letter X which was an anonymously written public version that was published in foreign affairs, while they were meant to wake the United States up to the character and nature of the Soviet Union which he nailed, they weren't actually the basis of the policy. The containment policy came in a secret document called NSC 68, which was crafted chiefly by Kennan's successor, Paul Nitze. And Paul Nitze, his team took Kennan's ideas and took it in a decidedly militaristic direction. Something that Kennan opposed from the outside for the rest of his life. And him and Nitze were rivals and people don't understand that Kennan opposed most of the containment policy that he's often credited with. And there were lots of examples of this, including in the Korean War, where he advocated a much less militaristic, much more economically focused and industrially focused response.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:44:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=edsAvDMUOGpiiEL7i8UKEoag1RQ8QeI9loDNq4UYag7l1Lw4YMSjeq9Nm9PmBVPIx7mWWcpDYxzlN_VPiYVqgbJMdL0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2683.59) So when people say we need a Kennan, sometimes they're thinking we need a Nitze. But regardless, it's just a trope. And it's one of these tropes that people use to comment casually about the competition with China. They'll say, "Oh well, we don't want another Cold War." And, "How can you advocate for a Cold War?" And, "Isn't a Cold War a terrible thing?" And what I say to that is that first of all it's really an overused and imperfect analogy because the competition with China, while it's on a scope and a scale of the struggle with the Soviet Union, the analogy is just too imperfect to be very useful. It's a systems battle. And there are some things to learn from the Cold War but there are other things that aren't relevant. And the Chinese Communist Party uses this idea of a Cold War as a cudgel to attack anyone who wants to confront any of their bad behavior and this is like the Thucydides' Trap, which I also take issue with in the book because what I say is that first of all the Thucydides' Trap theory is crap because it's based on a very specific, hand-picked, cherry picked I would say, number of examples. But also, because-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:45:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_SgoxwLnJ5mv-qbMttOf6N1mkwohPvz0c0NGEtCDjGydE95ZLYjICaHLhJuyEYKkh4jWLXPDOrgKhcIrTZPF7k8R1Ns&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2748.4) It's also not a really great ... The Athenians initiated war against the Spartans so I'm not really clear on who the rising power is supposed to be in this scenario. Because the Athenians had the Delian League. They were the larger, more powerful city state at the time. In any case, I didn't read the book but I just thought it was a weird ... I think it's a weird analogy.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:46:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=EOjFA8P-i6RGOKoeKWfxetf5pWC_gbvuhRRH9T-TEjTcaIWSDG1wvg5psjH0IHEkpAqP85c6I9hQKIVrQEaCddxP-4Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2765.21) No, no. I read it in college. But regardless of who fired the first shot, the idea is that the rising power and the declining power are destined to clash regardless of who fired the opening salvo. The dynamics of risingness and fallingness are what cause countries to go to war. And what I say is that no, that's one reason that countries go to war. There are lots of other reasons countries go to war over the course of history and it's an impossible thing to measure risingness and fallingness because relative power of countries is impossible to measure, especially over the large sweep of history. And anyway, you could use any other arbitrary frame to make an argument that this is why countries go to war. I would say that totalitarian, nationalist, socialist regimes that are expansionist and repressive and aggressive, they tend to find themselves getting into scrapes. You know what I mean? That has nothing to do with risingness and fallingness.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:46:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=2YQiMA8S9BANwVNO6kX4GPPlwr1GctJIOALrFzd1c5gWhTuI4hG2sLnKA3DkghkswpjQVd0u7QlXV_Uu9jgDig_MiuA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2816.59) But also America's a democracy. It hasn't stopped us from going to war. We've gone to war plenty. But again, I want to make sure because this is such a complex subject. I agree with your point about Cold War. It's a term I've used often because I think it's very easy to get people's attention. I think strategic competition is the objective. The ideal scenario here is that we enter a period of strategic competition with the CCP because they've been in at least strategic competition with us forever. Some would argue that they've been at war with us. I was also pleased to see that you spoke with Roger Robinson for your book. I've met Roger. I know Roger. I've gotten to know Roger. I spoke with him at length about his experience, not just working for David Rockefeller in his time at Chase, but also during his time under the Reagan administration and everything they did to fight a financial war against the soviets. Fascinating guy. So, the point about money, to bring it back to something you said very early on and then you touched on it with the MSCI index, it isn't just that the CCP and China INC use money to corrupt other countries as part of this larger international ambition.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:48:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SDoLpCuRpErehuemqKIt_SYB-jbClGLMLChVCD0c6QqZ9qzlOPJJkIDIGVtu_RRdb7rloYiB_8xppygurLOQUpU7ouc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2886.83) And Belt and Road is a great example of that. But they also take in enormous amounts of capital from US financial markets. And they do this to build out, not just legitimate companies the way we think of it. They use it to build out things like the surveillance systems in these concentration camps. They use it to build out their Navy. So, what we're doing is I think ... Again, to try to hammer something home or repeat it because I think it's so important. I think most people probably still in the US have this idea of China as a normal country. As a normal country that sort of has been folded into with the WTO and with increasingly different bilateral arrangements folded into this international, neoliberal, commercial capitalist order. And they just want to play just like us. They just want to produce products, grow their GDP. But it's not like that. Because the country is communist. It's a communist country that has plugged into the international capitalist system and they're using that to build out their domestic economy.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:49:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Mg9KbAtsSN3WgeiVyUl42FjHl1KrjUuy9RYI_YCYKCtLYhzInS6RA3IimyBfEomeYGuIE371mq053LKUqw0uuihIl6Y&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2949.82) But Chinese people can't even own property. They can't own real estate. People don't understand this. China doesn't have citizens; it has a population. And we'll get into the financial stuff in the overtime, but maybe to bring it back to ... I'm also kind of jumping now a bit, Josh, because I'm trying to do my best to guide people here. I mentioned strategic competition. Another thing we mentioned early on that I'd like to get into here because I think it can help with anecdotes to give people a sense of how the comprising works, how the influence operations work. You mentioned folks like Deng Murdoch, who is the ex-wife Rupert Murdoch, the great international media mogul, Elaine Chao, the wife of Mitch McConnell, the leader of the Senate, Montana Senator Steve Daines and others. These are important political people with influence. I'm not even talking about corporate chieftains. Let's talk about Elaine Chao for example. How plugged in is she and how does all of that work? Like as an example of how influence operations work.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:50:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-AmVsW4qo9cZ275v-blPk_GA0FZWILLaozJzNgUTJiHB_gmBlJUPgxsvyUmM7JM9k1aVFosbmLxC-PuSbc63IbOVcn0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3011.67) Right, right, right. It's actually all related because it's all related on their side. So, even though your question seemed a little meandering, the truth is that you're getting to something that's really important and really at the core of the conundrum, which is that on the CCP side, the markets, the influence, the military stuff, the industrial policy, it's all connected. It all goes back to the party. And there really is no business without the party. And whenever the party's interests conflict with national interests or the Chinese business interests, the party interests win out. And that's just the way things are and that's something that we just all have to deal with. Now, that manifests itself in our systems in a bunch of really crazy and corrupt ways. And the easiest way is when they convince all these Wall Street firms to funnel Americans' money into their pockets, which in their mind builds a constituency for their companies in our society. In other words, did you know that the TSP, which is the Thrift Savings Plan, which is the pension for all of the US military members, five million members of the military, was planning to increase its holdings in several maligned Chinese companies?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:51:25](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YiAkYvd8Ng5eMVTTzEOPr9dzDxCEQaexlEv-_GkZ6YIKeVfOkjeyqm7gj46nqBkcDqN4kQ1Pms1swcvtDy1B9Coj9eA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3085.6) In other words, US soldiers' pensions were being invested in the companies that were committing atrocities and building the systems that are pointed at the soldiers. They're funding their own enemy.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:51:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=l3_VvqfYOmYa2MnyJaTocLMrHWliYQGReRn9hwl_XYiI65sFzORuSm958QmGQcSJw5iucEOcI27ompbPxr4U1lYSod0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3097.31) I know. It's insane. Are any of these companies that you say are maligned, are any of these also sanctioned?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:51:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-w_dPNflUjRDKs63sas55Rm_ByvTFP5BZXhqg3VRWnEirNgTQ2JB9C_Qtv0fedrXiXZTCfq5txOzxmIDQbgxLrUOzxU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3102.07) Yes, they are sanctioned. Yeah.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:51:43](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=E6AcGTQZBJMlGBjbXzlsymkAaY5ayypg-8z21EZjJSducGNV_pTvStVCvszEE6a0mOGfOenmC24YLjvwgHNw58LGINE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3103.19) Yeah. So, I mean, it's incredible.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:51:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=A5PUuwNe5VEh2bpUi1eTJLN6SqKCqY2J6ZjVS97avs8UKBPTLIZVY48i0KogcQT1Mx_2vp6XTGKpYxtuKhIqZ4Uq1Rg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3105.05) The Commerce Department will sanction a company and Wall Street will shovel money at it until the sanctions are meaningless so Wall Street's actually undermining our government policy as we're trying to implement it, which-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:51:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=U2XOzXHGQIVlQkO699HRfzE6ofQSeP3EZSTPTk-F7SZBItFtauuRduaV63bFYCc96NG45mZG8rAXz3rEhCVYCMwXDh4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3114.9) And some of these companies too, don't have to abide by accounting standards that US companies-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:52:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=eCAx0wEYuQ9PPXPuh2zjaOIcYgHS6299EAvmEwk1zV-3xdMD7BcMIIvLJrRmDbT1MOJwgM3ue1lk0ExoM8OURYNjkuA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3120.64) None of them do. And they can't be audited by the way because according to Chinese law you can't audit a Chinese company in any real way. So, it means necessarily that all of their financial disclosures such that they are, are crap, are lies. And Wall Street has quite intentionally avoided cleaning up that massive loophole for years and years and years because they're getting super rich on both ends. By helping the companies do the corruptions and also on the fees by investing Americans into that system. And that's what Roger Robinson is about. He was the guy during the soviet struggle who said, "Hey, what if we just stop giving them a bunch of money?" At that time, it was just about their budgets. It was a much simpler problem actually. And they created something called the Siberian Pipeline Dispute and then they started to put pressure on the Soviet Union in terms of starving it of credit and it folded under its own economic weight, under its own economic contradiction. So, that's not going to work for China because it's a much more powerful, much more rich, much more diverse economy-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:52:56](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=sK1hNAhii9P30xk7GDK6rI2u4VrQQNwjtxn64e4VzYL0vB6mcKddzWzenPHAJaI6WkCUd0iuAnM_2DBqDz75QNou0dA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3176.77) And internationally plugged in, right? Because the soviets weren't plugged in.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:53:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=jHON0XHF8u-q1W3480Q97y_HOIyGMjjmwY1pk9cgPm66DkqPs-OR4cF4sp4xw80Z_yDelqGqimCc1dY7tYprrCQWev4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3180.56) Yes. Exactly.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:53:01](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=dDg9SBebCWEIvyTV_mUqF3KkPAt59KiszT5oVeOxwznCfQUvURV7cMmMmHw6IU4p75tim6HNgOYpoim7-16bP55n7Jg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3181.54) And they needed hard currency even more desperately than the Chinese which have international business and can obtain dollars that they can use.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:53:08](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=u47ZOo-YGlDJDhFUjTP_Z_GYPd32jGM53hrKRYfziOCsmZWESFd3os68Y0WIeZlL7fExHUWwOwnP1RhYud2VR7MjnM4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3188.16) Right. But the Chinese also have a currency that doesn't trade on the international market so how are they getting all this money to buy countries and industries and continents? Where are they getting all this cash? Well, they're getting it from us. And Roger Robinson's argument is very simple. Let's stop giving them all of our money because it's a terrible thing to do. And he made some progress in that but basically Wall Street is still pushing back and that gets us to the Elaine Chao story, which is really a crazy story because Elaine Chao and her family, the Chao family, is in a way an example of a Chinese, Taiwanese, and an American success story. They're the only family that's royalty in China and Taiwan and in the United States all at the same time. How did they do that? Well, Elaine Chao's father, James Chao, went to school with Jiang Jiemin. But he was on the losing side of the revolution so he fled to Taiwan where Elaine Chao was born. They eventually came to America, became very successful. And then when the opening happened, James Chao went back to his old friends in the CCP and cut a bunch of deals, built a massive shipping company.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:54:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4ttnuTGWrat-IUkJtZGDWLRc_k81x9EyKqFT5Xx7XjJDJiwnWohDYtPEP-qfOP_8jt10f4wChsX0ro7xbAzywUwlcnI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3249) He's just inarguable a brilliant and successful businessman. Now, that's all well and good, but the problem was when Elaine Chao became a very senior US official, especially when she became transportation secretary under the Trump administration, she started mixing that business and her official duties over and over and over and over again while nobody really cared, nobody really watched, and anytime anyone raised a finger to object her family would say, "Oh, that's racist. How can you attack Elaine Chao?" And the bottom line was if you're doing ... She did 21 interviews with Chinese media and zero with the American media when she was the ... And her dad's sitting there. She tried to do a trip to China where she tried to get the transportation department to set up meetings for her family members. And her sister's on the board of the Bank of China and they do huge, huge business with China. So, she had a conflict of interest. The one that she didn't bother to even try to pretend to address in any way. In fact, she flaunted it. And that's not an accusation that she didn't anything illegal but that's the problem with conflict of interest. It puts people to a choice inside their minds, inside their wallets.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:55:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hKq-A7M8zovDkG8Lol4qHVrgIbd4iToJ2wZb8pReXCcgZvCg6muDeS6alUNcO-4Ul_SBZ1SuuN4kt9fS5uhuVsvrcUk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3318.45) That's why we have a responsibility in our government, if you have a conflict of interest, to divest or get rid of it or at least to try to pretend that you're not using your family business and the US Transportation Department in some sort of corrupt way. And she just didn't care. She didn't do any of that. So, for people inside Washington who were trying to trace Chinese influence, how do you deal with that? It's one thing if a Hong Kong billionaire comes into your university and tries to dump a couple million dollars on you to shut up about Tibet. That's a pretty easy one. It's not easy, but it's easier. But when you have the US Transportation Secretary who's married to the senate majority leader and she's a cabinet member and she's mixing her family's business interest and US government business pretty blatantly actually, what do you do about that? I don't think there's anything you could do about that. Now, when you get to guys like Steve Daines, that was really interesting because Steve Daines is a senator who knows China. He used to live in China and Hong Kong. He was an executive for Procter Gamble. He's some sort of dupe.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:56:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=P-oS3SNDkPjhxSfX1rBXJXa-ggFoUqpIs1ibgG8fnqEN5FzMAhjlMXEC_PjSIED35QaV65jSpbepYl85xvO23kjgVRc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3381.74) The Chinese Communist Party can dupe a lot of people. What they do is they'll drag a bunch of low level congressional staffers to Xinjiang on some sort of seven star vacation and they'll take them to-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:56:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KowMj9YwSPaeBXs3OB-rLUeSpUnjrKGmeabEd4rwuXdvoDEfNxF2DPqpzl4zKl_mtpKT6ysFAjsDhJSLD4XibFTeuck&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3392.07) Like those trips to North Korea?

**Josh Rogin:** [00:56:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=1R9-WiMfBrGypQQfNPZdk62gtyAvJpWUUG04l6NCsEmEd00KGy64sw9YGjkfWjqnlrLkKaPAH5Zw695aO7S-pYii8mM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3393.66) Yes, but with much better accommodations and much better food and then you go to some sort of Potemkin Uyghur village and the Uyghurs there are like, "We love Xi Jinping. He's great." And they're like, "See." And that's one thing. But when you talk about Steve Daines, he's a guy who should know better, who does know better. And when he took all the trips and he went to Tibet, went to Xinjiang, hung out with the party leaders, didn't say a word about the atrocities there. And then when he gets back-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:56:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vQWEyPPn3Ju8hnKyoVbjV9h_aMn9xiWlhVxMI6DGNHqc-ZO0_EnVGBtV89Gud7f8zhssXeKNWC8uFm6UBf2XXe9k32M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3418.38) Heck, he said a lot of positive stuff about it. He said positive stuff about China's role in Tibet.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:57:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=y7RedpNchlDHricJOsPvLg8FB3wyUGdRplpHGXtzTlUM_7auOiPzkvppvm5DB2-eQNTTeMgBy1FhriOtyokMZWeCkOs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3423.19) Well, at different times he says different stuff. You know what I mean? Which is a sure sign that he's playing games. But the point is, when he got back to DC, he's trying to work out this deal for Montana beef exports. And he actually did. Him and the Chinese ambassador are wearing chaps on some Montana ranch and their cowboy hats and walking around and they struck a deal. Then the phone call comes and, "Hey Senator Daines. Hey, listen, Tibetan Sikyong, the head of the Tibetan government in exile is coming to Washington for a hearing. What we want you to do is we want you to counter program that with a bunch of our CCP Tibet officials in the capital so we can get some pictures and put out some counter narrative stuff." Okay, no problem. So, they have the meetings in the capital building with the CCP figures and they blare it out all over Xinhua and China Daily. "Steve Daines says Tibet's lovely. The CCP is great in Tibet." Now, did he actually say that in the meeting? I don't know. It doesn't matter. The point is they got their story and he helped them do it and he thought nobody would notice.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:58:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ehhVNkz9c5qVI-yZzOfvETpU3W2YLUmIc4NZo6CHxmBbEfYK5UzrHyyxgBEcLX97UF3zzDnkqhvpW1cxrYnyXphVZoo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3482.6) And that's a US senator mixing his economic interest with their political interest. Because they're not whitewashing Tibetan atrocities for some sort of economic ... I mean, there's an economic angle to it, but they're doing it because it's in the party's interest to hide from their atrocities and that's a US senator helping him do it. That's pretty nefarious. That's pretty ugly. But then when I published that, Steve Daines' response was like, "Oh, these Washington columnists. They don't understand what I'm doing for Montana ranchers." And there was no real consequence. And that's the other problem is that if nobody cares that you're doing the CCP's bidding then the incentive is just to do it. And that's what I think you see with Steve Daines, I think that's what you see with Neil Bush, the son of George H.W. Bush.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:58:46](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UnD8w-Eyc6aNjBMwYQFFKvjQ4PT3LKZQQiq1Nd-okeSCW07wVQxBQL7vLNW4TDAe65djx03oNqpjZMtJZV-zegK_8WA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3526.3) Another crazy connection. Yeah. And University of Texas.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:58:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s8gRdrpmowhEwnSHANZSMZD6cJtW5DFvbR-JwRdV6eXicCNhsaOcNFkWGgWgGKZ-1Ps58d5pr8YSG4Blxo78QQaKhmM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3530.05) Yeah. And why is Jeffrey Sachs writing an op-ed denying there's a genocide in Xinjiang? Is that what he's supposed to do?

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:58:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CTZ7JR9EAreKgJKBiTKnSEVTwcGjVWF-P08frEH6QJgyHi3jsCtlS2gFxxXHjGH0ZQjnCGYdBKpSdPw5mYJtvBacSyc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3537.76) Did he put that out recently? I thought he was Mr. Environment also. I thought he was all about saving the world from global warming. So, apparently-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:59:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Ye8AuIrNtxtMQ0wrJBDDmz1iCJF9z3YjC6rl7WT3n1TNGcFVCXV0oWDIkfW6QL9uc2HUlDyY6zyANXTM-Bc665j6ymQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3544.71) Right. Not only is there environmental cooperation a lie, but just ... Why does he feel the need to get involved in Uyghur genocide denialism? It's not because that's his business. It's because he's doing favors for the CCP for other favors. Whatever they are.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:59:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Noc3YjmW2kPJd720f9ZW6v6Edl_w21LePKojN6xiAoed2iuRfDjI4-zl8gAkfkg7LUPkp1DqMA0MMOqMCqOEz63fDiI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3560.04) You know what else too? And not to suggest that this is the case with Jeffrey Sachs because I have absolutely ... I'm not implying that. It just came up in my head because you have all of these ... Also, sex is a huge way of corrupting officials. Whether it's China, whether it's there are rumors around-

**Josh Rogin:** [00:59:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=R7Q6pY4gIEfwLd6PCxIsUU46qSCyb0pJsOYWR2JFYzgLg7LZLozM78UrmxwtwWB3guSKcHe_bei60XuSBiHFOyUbqQE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3574.74) We're not accusing Jeffrey Sachs of-

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:59:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9nxEhV_9eElZJhRAsMESnx_ePtbE8ApqqcjjX-fKBMmpxE6yKFR1gepiUKKyXc9XdIMfz1hvpM2pyUV30XqlwaIqQ38&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3576.04) No. We're not. But Jeffrey Sachs reminded me of Jeffrey Epstein and Jeffrey Epstein, one of the theories around that was that that was an intelligence operation that was used to corrupt people. And there's all sorts of nefarious influence operations going around.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:59:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=K-FTttynUwgWACKzEp20a1ZZGpyUDNMSGDJLzNDomyDWBgpSKpY03Kau3-_v0thPj_HY8uSnkjU7zkohPjx_R803c0k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3589.55) Yeah. That's the old trade crowd. That's what they did to Neil Bush.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:59:51](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=arAVTxxm5XWKQUddRUIxQ3mswaf5iyBQ10YcqDS9N7BYtcrrJ6P0-5RPsxN8PE0GPCBmt4Yj6a7TDcjEo2sc07LYUe0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3591.03) But there are sexual ... I mean, you highlighted some of them in the book around China.

**Josh Rogin:** [00:59:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=IAlbH4WNmb3X9aaQ7UJBRMWVjpP9L_PBC1AnPLQQKuRYNCQvbWr2gqVHWpRR1H5u4wQdbDJVSZjsTM7JBFF6p95I-v0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3593.74) Look at Eric Swalwell.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [00:59:55](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=50D0YWV74bDHoVOkcmllZADXrLSwdY_zQIZJctBHK669tGJAv_D8ZJA06gY-ogWHsTsPcndzPLrCxKKqhkSbCY2qtnE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3595.07) Yeah. So, again, not suggesting Jeffrey Sachs in this case, but again, there are all sorts of ways in which these sorts of individuals become corrupted and people I think, once they begin to peel back the onion will be genuinely amazed at how many tentacles reach far into all sorts of areas of American power.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:00:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qaRTGxOp_dFVIFob8UXw1NbCiAHnQwRpbEsTRsGWUvA7mizHRPcGYqu_itM3zdEHvxB1kvKu_HcCYDO-XXfyJXAizd4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3614.72) Josh, I'm going to move the rest of our conversation into the overtime.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:00:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UcZHzZc2m8iobIhrXsJFam9cK5IxNzBSXMj5rw6VV0VRsmCxmxLykkLOst1zCEbHwVslWOk3LS-62MRpJhuTTvANdFU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3618.82) Okay.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:00:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Q7-VH3-_V8l0xfr5sNPRxWTQjwFVdxZ-8aqrHDaEUqmNHnLL57UpS9Cl7zdV-Ef7nEWjhFCVP76xQyEBvC6W5xp8DC8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3619.59) I want to continue discussing the financial side of this story. One of the things I want to talk about is executive order 13959. Because the last I checked, that was supposed to come into effect in November and it's meant to address the threat from securities investments in financing Chinese military companies.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:00:36](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aLo_8IKlh2-FVW394stwKNvvKMP49vlQza8Zp8V9MCK2xipaNj7yjDfV8qr3CeFCgA9AMJ3cdG-vQMeCRwDOqHcu4WA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3636.89) Can I make a closing comment before we go to the overtime?

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:00:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=f1pTZbUuqiKQR3-fD6MArT-IQZ4Gn3D8DL0TuNwqcgPdIEUAQ1Iov2ZgjjluJgQLm5QNti0deqaylWDh6K-jhAtqUW0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3639.24) Absolutely. Absolutely. Let me just say what else I want to talk about for listeners to know. I also want to discuss the Wuhan Institute of Virology and the lab leak hypothesis. Because we haven't touched on that at all here and I think it's an enormous story. You've caught a lot of flak for it undeservingly. You've done a really amazing job covering this and I think people are beginning to sort of ... Yeah. 60 Minutes did a piece on this. The truth is beginning to come out on this issue. But go ahead. Those are the two main things I want to discuss in the overtime, but there are other things if we have time.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:01:11](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=edV3nj1o6HR6HSiKLbakKajdN4jC0WJWxy83QEazidDkFFaD7LZ1qmm1by9lLHquXjKeZuI2owzHxN0H90hw9z6FfjQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3671.36) Yeah. I just didn't want to leave on the honey trap comment. I wanted to make a broader point, which is basically that if you read the book, if you listen to this conversation, if you find yourself interested in these things, this is the point that I want to leave you with. Which is that the China discussion, the discussion of the US relationship with China and the increasing obvious need to compete and confront a CCP that's growing increasingly problematic in ways that affect our lives, that discussion has become very politicized and very nasty. And my argument, and what I try to argue for the book, is that actually it's a discussion that all Americans need to have devoid of politics. That we have to press our leaders, especially our lawmakers, to stop using the China issue as a weapon to beat each other on the heads with and to find the overlap and the commonalities. And I suggest that they start with the human rights because that's the obvious thing. But to be perfectly honest, the real overlap isn't about the human rights, it's about protecting Americans from these efforts to influence their institutions and their lives that we don't know about. And that means a lot more transparency, a lot more investigation, a lot more forcing these institutions to disclose these relationships.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:02:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mHmV7YY-ubQ1CKkIDxkizpbvhxpdG-dmV1jRZfcwvRPYIOzIsk_QsBWmKuCpNXQiThjh-21MsMl-7Cut2gAKcwJi6G4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3744.73) And that's not aimed at China. That's aimed at making ourselves better. That's aimed at shoring up our democracy and our society so that it's protected from any foreign corruption and influence, not just the Chinese foreign corruption and influence. Because we're only as strong as our weakest link and if our democracy is a mess then our model is not attractive to the rest of the world. So, the best way to compete with China is to be the best version of ourselves.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:02:50](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4RSRTtCsLZFzpduKRNnVku7Omc9jCxDb7egjUz0kEDo_qp4kB68tNCIgIMFJQ7Jf5z9RVzWHve_srthsA_q69BDCoLU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3770.69) Well said. And that was actually harping back to George Kennan. Something he warned against in his long telegram to the United States in 1946, which was in competing with the Soviet Union we risked becoming more like our adversary. And in many ways America has become like that.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:03:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=_fAf9Me6I2lVJEvrnOr8CPXQTt6E9-UsSC7yhC_Y8Y2h6ijRqeD7ye0FZf9AKA3af3pGWMuLwG38Aq4HT3VTu6n9dvo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3785.14) Unfortunately.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:03:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0r_pvcwBYSIxqqBw_bxDTcfgVM2Fc6uKfMqH1-Q-wh5byvqjSeA8_UCbRCib3Zw78RE4Qf8XlX25RJQXMOUPc-BQQoo&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3785.2) In its last major conflict against "terrorism" we made a lot of compromises. And that is a legitimate concern.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:03:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=4cPjLd4J49qGuF29y2OxOXi666iuvM1O__DfOWRvONW1dGPEDqdbu0FEcpGVpNrB6HEHPdMOOfegJDPRbV1PefTWZAI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3792.84) We should learn the lessons of that.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:03:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KEjWUpHm8R0HAZxMvuIRFBiPKySAuUrOBgpuKJogpZGET3-XAIFDF6bJ90gzVRhqC1wBd5mhjoLN-tC7k0_Lvv1mUJQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3794.1) Exactly.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:03:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=UiuPlla1w1lGa7l1nyuuCFUdSS8GKVD_s4rsrI0OJxQthsYSFRUNRY7zBzvdfX704H-Z-fWZG3RvxTpBqzsw06tIQaU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3795.6) And that means not demonizing Chinese and Chinese Americans and Asian Americans in our society. It means treating them with respect and actually protecting them because they're often victims of the same targeted influence that we are. And yes, it means all of those things. That we can't repeat the mistakes of the war on terror. We can't over militarize it. There is a way that we could overreact that we have to avoid. But at the same time, we can't ignore the problem and we can't ignore the threat. That should be probably clear at this point.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:03:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=p7Dgzk5zjTFgLIPanVUJ1IKl3Rmyh16wZwG4_U1KvMMfH-d3CwEK5rsm0OBAAR50vvfQCTlGZ-DLnfGvYL4YTJ27-vI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3822.51) Just to reiterate, we're going to get more into the financial side of this equation. I also want to talk about the lab leak hypothesis in Wuhan. Also, what you just said made me think about the technological race that's happening between the US and China and one thought I had, Josh, and we'll follow it up in the overtime is this point about legitimacy, illegitimacy. By relying more on these Orwellian technologies, it becomes easier and easier for the CCP to exert control in an illegitimate manner over a very large population. And I wonder how much time you've spent thinking about that. About those technological dimensions.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:04:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wxHE9FFdZz34jpeZTzYKbqZd9yDlBuINMtmzq7itUp_wlkN09HQILpp0T51G14qyaRsmUCEa6qlhaMdBF0T6Yb23gdk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3855.95) So for anyone who is new to the program, Hidden Forces is listener supported. We don't accept advertisers or commercial sponsors. The entire show is funded from top to bottom by listeners like you. If you want access to the second part of my conversation with Josh, as well as the transcripts and rundowns to this episode and every other episode we've ever done, head over to hiddenforces.io and check out our episode library or subscribe directly through our Patreon page at patreon.com/hiddenforces. There's also a link in the summary page to this episode with instructions on how to connect the overtime feed to your phone so that you can listen to these extra discussions just like you listen to the regular podcast.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:05:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ycO5DpofccU3MSViHNwvBhNfQFAA5w4kGJlNA4-33XonqohI9Mm-oZOx0yKo5EYkf5suWptQxNCg9jPMZ1wyvkSpsd8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3900.26) Josh, stick around. We're going to move the second hour of our conversation into the subscriber overtime.

**Josh Rogin:** [01:05:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7N2mG7f01ezcMNdRMmTIX2W0RNc1Mz6dnl7wfJmmyxflMVbkwIur02Le36YujUpu7w91swsJX7gzH6gKHnuej_1CAtk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3905.73) Excellent.

**Demetri Kofinas:** [01:05:07](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=i8vNDCvSvwVMoIMbtK_NYWFXoRc0irDwAXQYJGu1XrzZbQghnjOLtmLvbu7dVMlMEWM7echf9NE79Cactn71Xcjqdis&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3907.5) Today's episode of Hidden Forces was recorded in New York City. For more information about this week's episode or if you want easy access to related programming, visit our website at hiddenforces.io and subscribe to our free email list. If you want access to overtime segments, episode transcripts, and show rundowns full of links and detailed information related to each and every episode, check out our premium subscription available through the Hidden Forces website or through our Patreon page at patreon.com/hiddenforces. Today's episode was produced by me and edited by Stylianos Nicolaou. For more episodes you can check out our website at hiddenforces.io. Join the conversation at Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @hiddenforcespod or send me an email. As always, thanks for listening. We'll see you next week.