



THE NIXON SEMINAR

on Conservative Realism and National Security

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Social Media, Free Speech and National Security

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PARTICIPANTS

Secretary Mike Pompeo, Ambassador Robert C. O'Brien

Monica Crowley, Alex Gray, Mary Kissel, Kimberly Reed, Rep. Mike Waltz, Alex Wong

Special Guest: Rep. Ro Khanna

Mary Kissel: Good evening. And welcome to The Nixon Seminar for Conservative Realism and National Security. I'm your host, Mary Kissel, with Stephens Inc. We are honored to have Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador O'Brien co-chairing our discussion tonight alongside our outstanding seminar members. And tonight, we're featuring a very special guest, Congressman Ro Khanna of California. So, welcome to you, Congressman.

Our topic tonight is Free Speech, Social Media, and National Security. It's a big topic. It's a timely topic. We'll try to break it down into two parts: the domestic component — how free speech is related to national security and can or cannot impact it, and then the international component — as foreign actors use sometimes our tools to manipulate our public debate and impact our security.

So, let's get going. I'm going to use the moderator's privilege to ask the opening question, and then we'll move quickly to the co-chairs and the seminar members for a lively debate. So, Congressman Khanna, welcome. So happy to have you here today particularly since you represent Silicon Valley and California. Let's start by setting the stage. If you could, speak to our viewers about how you perceive tech connecting to national security.

Cong. Khanna: Well, first of all, Mary, thank you. Thank you. It's an honor to be participating in this seminar. Thank you to the co-chairs and all the participants.

I would say a few things about technology and national security. First, it's critical that we have advanced technology in AI, in cyber, in quantum computing, in our submarines, in space, and make sure that we're leading the world in technology, and not lose that edge to China or any other nation. And my sense is that there can be a common understanding in the congress for that imperative.

Second, to the extent the technology is facilitating public discourse and speech, we want to make sure that it's open, robust, wide open, and doesn't engage in viewpoint discrimination. The reason I think that matters for national security is, unlike China where you can't criticize the government, you can't criticize corruption, you can't criticize wrong decisions, in this country, you can. And that, to me, is why we are incredibly exceptional. When someone messes up in congress, you hear about it. When someone messes up as president, you hear about it. And that explains, I think, our resilience as a nation, and free speech is connected to that. And technology should continue to facilitate that.

Mary Kissel: Well, thank you. That's a great place to start. You mentioned China. Secretary Pompeo, I'll go to you for the next question, and then we'll go to Ambassador O'Brien to follow up.

Sec. Pompeo: Go ahead, Mary. Do you have a separate question or same question?

Mary Kissel: Well, sure. We should ask the basic question. Is China ahead of us in some of these technology fields like AI and big data? Maybe it's the question. I don't know if we should ask that question in public, but I think it is the question.

Sec. Pompeo: So, if you looked at it in the most broad sense, we're still in a pretty good place. And if you looked at our capacity, the rate of change, our ability to absorb, adapt, apply these technologies, we're still in a pretty good place. But it is equally the case that one should never rest on their laurels, especially when it comes to someone like the Chinese Communist Party that is not going to play the long game and invest and build it, but rather just simply steal it and copy it and go about obtaining that capability, that information, and sometimes in ways that are unlawful — steal it. Other times, they just give money to our universities and take it outright because, well, they were part of the research team. And so, we need to be mindful to protect and preserve these technologies for America's national security and interest, and for that of our security partners as well.

And then, I guess, the last thing I'd say here, too — you know, technology is, in some sense, agnostic. And we can talk about really great uses of different pieces of

technology and really dangerous uses as well. And there is a substantive role for the federal government to when that technology is being used in a way that is inconsistent with American national security, to grab it, to rein it back in. I'm sure we'll spend a lot of time talking about the different tools, but whether that is investment review processes like CFIUS or the capacity to do what Congressman Khanna spoke about, Representative Khanna spoke about, which is to make sure that there is in fact viewpoint neutrality, that we don't have huge arms of the private sector being shanghaied by the United States government along a particular political viewpoint, is something that President Nixon couldn't even have thought about. It was so much more diverse, so much more unique, so much more tailored and nuanced.

And today, the difference between a news organization and a bulletin board, right...sometimes Facebook and Twitter want to tell you they're just a place to post, and there's other times it is clear they are pushing particular narratives. You got to fish or cut bait. You're either an editor or a conduit of communication. And when they try to play the line, government has a responsibility to try and step in to make sure that all of those viewpoints, to the Congressman's point, all of those viewpoints are being heard, whether they're going after the Secretary of State or applauding what it is someone's doing.

Mary Kissell: Well, to that point, Congressman, you wrote a great op-ed in December in "The Wall Street Journal." It was titled, "Twitter's Duty to Protect Free Speech." And you came down, I would say, very forcefully and vigorously for that open debate. Is that a view that's, you know, widely shared among your colleagues on the Democrat side, on the Republican side? I mean, what is the view on Capitol Hill?

Cong. Khanna: I think it's shared among some, but I think it is more important today than ever before. And let me explain why. If the country is so polarized where we have differences of opinion about our way of life, certainly the last thing you want to do is tell someone, "Don't speak. We don't want to hear what you have to say." We've got to find a way of listening to each other, and doing so with an open mind. That's been the hallmark of American democracy. It's what makes us such an exceptional nation.

One of the points I made to Twitter and Facebook executives is, you're brilliant in technology, but you just started thinking about speech issues five years ago. We have a tradition of almost 250 years of the best jurisprudence on First Amendment and free speech in the history of humanity. There are jurists who have struggled with these issues for decades. So, yes, you don't legally have to adopt First Amendment principles. You're a private actor. But given how many people are on the public square, why don't you look to some of those First Amendment principles in shaping your platforms, and that you do have a duty to democracy?

One of the points I make is, with newspapers like "The Wall Street Journal," they published my op-ed. If all they cared about was attention maximization, they would never publish an op-ed by me. They'd publish every op-ed by Kim Kardashian. But they don't. They have some responsibility or duty to the public sphere. They care about having an alternative viewpoint. They care about publishing the President of the United States Joe Biden even though they supported...didn't support him in the election. Those values have to be inculcated in social media, and we have a ways to go for that to happen.

Mary Kissel: What an interesting point. You know, President Nixon wrote extensively about the media's role in patriotism in media. There was a quote from his book, "Beyond Peace." Here it is. He was complaining about the current state of media as he saw it just a couple decades ago. He said, "They seem animated by an instinctual negativity about America and its values, and a sense of ambivalence about its power and stature." That's from his book, "Beyond Peace." Ambassador O'Brien, can you tie this together? You know, again, we're talking about the domestic environment and why free speech is so important to us. The Congressman put it, our resilience and therefore our national security.

Amb. O'Brien: Bravo, Mary. Thank you. And great to have Congressman Ro Khanna with us. But I would take a co-chairman's privilege for a moment. And this arrived in the mail today. Most of you won't be able to get your copy until next week, but it's "Never Give an Inch," Mike Pompeo's new book. I'm about a third of the way through it. I didn't really prep for this session very much because I was reading Mike's book.

There are two stories in the book, and both of them are great. One is, it's the American dream. Mike grew up in a middle class family in California, a lot like I did, you know, Italian-American, and went on to become Secretary of State. And I think all of us here have some sort of story like that — the Congressman and Alex Wong, many of us who came from immigrant families, Irish, Italian, Indian, Chinese, wherever you came from. And that's a great story.

The second story, though, which really affects...it's much like one of President Nixon's books that he wrote after being in office. It's how peace was strength, and America first keeps America safe. And you can see during the last four years how we...the world was at peace. We brought American hostages home. We did a lot of great things by being strong.

And so, there are two stories in the book. One is a strategy, a story about how we can keep ourselves and our allies safe, and have peace in the Middle East and other parts of the world because of a strong foreign policy in the United States. And two, it's just a great story about how anything's possible for anyone in America. And I'm sure this has

nothing to do with the upcoming presidential campaign and going even further in the career, but it's a terrific read. So, it comes out, I think, on the 24th. And I hope everyone will go out and buy a copy. And Mike, thank you for sending me an early version.

Sec. Pompeo: You're most welcome. Now, I'm really glad you got it, Robert.

Amb. O'Brien: Well, I'm a fan. So, let me get back to the issue here. And Ro, thanks for coming on. You're kind of coming into the lion's den.

Cong. Khanna: Well, thank you, Ambassador O'Brien. And thank you, Secretary Pompeo. I appreciate both of you inviting me.

Sec. Pompeo: Yes, sir.

Amb. O'Brien: You know, you're a fellow Californian. We'll try not to say anything too nice about you because that'll get you in trouble politically. But it's great. This is the sort of thing that we need to do in this country, is to bring people together and have these sorts of debates. So, I'm grateful that you're here.

Let me make one quick point. I'm sure we'll talk about other issues as we follow. When we're talking about big tech, we've got to focus on the low-hanging fruit. And the low-hanging fruit right here and right now is the fact that the Chinese Communist Party has basically state-owned or state-controlled industries and sectors and companies, big national champions like ByteDance, and TikTok, and WeChat, that are active here in the United States. Whereas Facebook, Twitter, Google are not active in China. There's no reciprocity. And this is something we worked on in the Trump administration. And Mike, we're talking about diplomatic rules and we worked on it with trade rules at the White House. There's no reciprocity here. The Chinese social media is used here, and it's used as a tool at the PRC and the CCP.

Number one, WeChat, they use that to spy on dissidents and spy on expats, and bully students and anyone who's interested in anyone of Chinese descent who's on WeChat, and is monitored and surveilled, and bullied on WeChat here in America. We should never let that happen.

And TikTok is the most massive own goal that we're scoring ever. It is a soccer term. TikTok is downloading and just devouring all of our personal data, biometric data, location data. They're tracking where drills are, they're tracking where soldiers, sailors, army, marines are, who have the TikTok app on their phone. The fact that we allow TikTok to be here and to operate, is really a scandal. And I understand why it's happening, because there are some big Wall Street investors and some big VC, venture capitalists, in Silicon Valley that invest in TikTok. And the only way those secure a big return on their investment is if TikTok could stay, is allowed to stay in America, and

allowed to continue to collect data on Americans and surveillance for the Communist Party.

So, there's plenty that we need to talk about with American big tech and the interaction between the FBI, for example, and other agencies and our companies. But the low-hanging fruit is, first of all, get rid of the Chinese social media that's pervasive in this country, and it's being used against us and weaponized against us.

Mary Kissel: I want to welcome Congressman Mike Waltz to the seminar. Hello, Congressman. Great to have you with us. I'm going to throw it back, though, first to Congressman Khanna. Can you follow up here on Ambassador O'Brien? If TikTok is such a scandal, if it's collecting data and manipulating users, should it be banned?

Cong. Khanna: I share Ambassador O'Brien's concerns and the concerns that Secretary Pompeo voiced at the end of the Trump administration about TikTok. And I actually was supportive of the proposal to force the sale of TikTok to an American company. I felt that was an elegant solution. Look, there are millions of American young folks who are on TikTok. It will be hard to just ban it, but there's no reason that that data should be getting anywhere close to the Chinese Communist Party. And it's millions of people who are having their data collected.

So, I know that there has been a proposal to sell it. The Biden administration has been looking at, well, can we have the servers in the United States? Can we make sure the data doesn't leave the United States? Can we have privacy laws in the United States? But my view is, let's make sure that if you want to have TikTok, that we have it owned by an American company, and then let's make sure we have strong data privacy laws in addition to that.

Mary Kissel: Okay. Alas, the other Congressman on the call is on the other side of the aisle. Congressman Waltz, your response?

Cong. Waltz: Not a heck of a lot to add to what Ambassador O'Brien. And I'm glad to hear my colleague and friend, Ro Khanna, add. I don't know if I missed this portion of the discussion, but the Indian government has banded along with dozens of other Chinese apps. And I think we should follow suit. I led a letter to the House Administration Office for the minimum members of congress to have it off of their devices, which recent legislation did not cover. It only covered the executive branch. So, I think we're making progress. We're sounding the alarm bells. I'm still having a heck of a hard time with some members of my family, but when I show them the documents that their passwords, their bank accounts, their biometrics, everything is being taken, it helps where I think we need to improve our narrative is really helping people understand what an adversary with AI can do with that data. You know, I just had an aunt say, "Why do I

care? Fine. They can have it. Facebook takes it, too." So, we've got a ways to go in our narrative, but I think we're making progress.

Mary Kissel: Alex Wong, jump in.

Alex Wong: Thank you, Mary. I think there's some important context, too, to put around this TikTok issue. Now, Congressman Khanna and others have rightly stated that First Amendment, free speech, that is a core American competitive advantage in our competition abroad. It's a huge contrast between us and Communist China as well as other adversarial governments abroad. But that right to free speech does not apply to foreign persons, non-citizens, and it certainly does not apply to organizations that may be linked or controlled by foreign governments, in particular, the CCP.

So, on TikTok, I think the move to ban it, the move to control it, to regulate it, is not a bold move at all. And furthermore, in context, for decades, the United States has prohibited and regulated foreign ownership of broadcast stations in the television context. So, moving to a rule where we are placing restrictions or requiring U.S. ownership of a platform like TikTok, that beyond the broadcast capabilities of putting out messages, putting out images to tens of millions of Americans, can also suck in the data of these Americans and share that with a foreign government that is adversarial. That is a stronger case for prohibition, a stronger case for regulation in line with what America has done with our broadcast stations for decades. So, this is a discussion now, but I don't think in the context of how we've handled media in America, a prohibition on TikTok would really be that far of a step.

Mary: Alex Gray, over to you.

Alex Gray: Yeah. Thanks, Mary. You know, I think what Secretary Pompeo has said in the past about a competition with China being a whole of civilization, whole of society debate, that is, you know, very relevant to the TikTok discussion because even at the state level, we're now seeing governors in Indiana and South Dakota, in my home state of Oklahoma, making very hard decisions to go ahead and take TikTok off of state devices, and showing that this isn't just a federal government issue. This is something that we have to address at all levels of society.

But I would also say on the larger issue of big tech, certainly, we have a censorship issue that we have to get our heads around and it's important. But we have to be very mindful of the tools that we use to address this challenge. And, you know, the anti-trust argument that folks on both the right and the left have used to try and break up some little pieces of legislation that have been introduced that would literally dismantle the U.S. tech industry while doing nothing to get us out and in front of our European competitors, our Chinese competitors, will do nothing about Alibaba, and Tencent, and ByteDance, you know, all of these real national security challenges, that type of taking,

using such a blunt tool for something that's really a very technical specialized issue, I think that's incredibly dangerous, and really risks setting us back technologically and in the national security domain.

Mary Kissel: Congressman Khanna, I want to bring you back in again as the representative to Silicon Valley. You're the resident expert here. It seems as if the seminar members are pretty aligned that banning TikTok seems like low-hanging fruit. But of course, that's what congress always does — it goes for the low-hanging fruit. Are there other kinds of foreign tech companies? Maybe it's not just China. Maybe it's Russia, maybe it's Iran or others, that we should be concerned about. And are there offensive actions that we should be taking besides banning them from operating in the United States? Perhaps sanctioning Americans who work for them abroad. How complex and how big is this problem that we're facing with some of these state-run companies and others?

Cong. Khanna: I'd say two things. I think there is a consensus at least on forcing the sale, which my sense was the Trump administration proposal. And we should see that throw in this congress, and this is why people can stay on TikTok as an app, but it would be owned by an American company. I also just want to briefly address the point about antitrust. I think, you know, as a representative of the Silicon Valley, I am incredibly proud of the innovation in technology that the Valley has provided the country in collaboration with DARPA and investments in technology. And I want America to stay at the forefront of that. So, just bashing tech, I think, will hurt us in terms of our national security and our ability to produce wealth. But we do need to have sensible antitrust so that companies aren't disallowing alternative platforms for emerging or privileging their own products. And I think the question is, how do we have a scalpel that allows for innovation and competitive open market without just bashing and reflexively breaking up tech companies?

To your point about China, look, here's my concern with what China has done. For 40 years, we basically let our production leave this country. And we said we didn't care. Andy Grove, who was the CEO of Intel was warning, was crying out in 2010, "What are you doing?" We've lost 70,000 factories in America. We've seen our trade deficit go from 80 billion to 400 billion. We've seen the Chinese Communist Party fund systematically industry after industry — steel, aluminum, the industries in drug production. And I think what the real challenge to America is, how do we get the production and innovation back? How do we use technology to make sure that we're producing in this country in partnership with government and business? I call it economic patriotism. There are people on the right who have articulated a version of wanting to bring manufacturing back. I really believe that is a place that has divided the government we have, that we can find common ground, for the renewal of American

production, for the renewal of American industry. And to meet that is the real competitive challenge with China.

Mary Kissel: Secretary Pompeo, just to follow up on what the Congressman just said, you were not just only Secretary of State, you also were head of the CIA. Is there economic patriotism still in Silicon Valley, or is what we read overblown and actually these CEOs are quite patriotic? What was your experience?

Sec. Pompeo: Oh, goodness. Like so many things, Mary, it's a mixed bag. I absolutely saw tech engineers, tech investors, tech entrepreneurs who were massively patriotic, who were working to help us actually achieve our goals. Consistent with U.S. law, they were doing things that made sense for America. They were not all about the bottom line. They were prepared to do the right thing.

What I think we end up focusing on are a handful of really big companies that are owned by some of America's largest investor groups. And so, while they have a minority ownership, they effectively control the disposition of how the leaders in that company actually operate. And they have become ungrounded, disconnected from this central understanding of our founding, which is, to the Congressman's point, it's let a thousand voices bloom.

As CIA director, I have two thoughts about what I observed here. I would get asked all the time when I was a Congressman, too, back home, "Tell me how I should absorb...how do I get this information? How do I figure out what is true?" And I would remind them of a couple things. One, our educational system has a responsibility to help create the capacity for people to read all these different voices and figure it out for themselves, to reason, to argue, to make the case. And the first amendment can get a little bit lazy by just saying, "Well, let's hear it all." It requires a populace — and our founders knew this, too — a populace that is prepared to actually discern this information and sort the wheat from the chaff, and figure out what's real.

The second piece is, we also need to be mindful that on the other end of the spectrum, there are bad actors that are using our First Amendment in ways that are deeply dangerous to us. I'll give you the case from my time in service of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks. There's actually other parties and there are folks in both parties who would take issue with what I'm about to say. But this guy was a sponsor for stealing some of America's most important information. He put soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, he put their lives at risk. He took massive amounts of American intellectual property that was properly classified, and put it out in the public space, and then tried to make the argument that he was just a good reporter. We need to make sure that we hold accountable those, too, that violate our rules, whether it's the Chinese Communist Party

or non-nation and state actors like Assange who are truly trying to use our First Amendment in ways that undermines the most central ideas of our democracy.

Mary Kissel: Monica Crowley, I want to go to you on this very difficult question of what is the balance of a free press, of that open dialogue and debate that Congressman Khanna talked about, and the protection of national security? Where do you draw the line?

Monica Crowley: Well, hi, Mary. Nice to see you. Happy New Year to everybody. It's great to see everybody again in 2023. And Congressman, it's great to see you. And I just want to start out by saying, hats off to you because thanks to Elon Musk and the exposure of the Twitter files, we now have a depth of truth about the actual collusion that's gone on here between government and big tech to silence and suspend and censor people who don't go along with the regime line. And my hat is off to you because you were the only Democrat, at least so far, in the Twitter files to have stood up for the First Amendment. And there's a reason why the founders made it the First Amendment and put free speech in number one, and not further back in the Bill of Rights. So, hats off to you. We need more of you on the left and in the Democratic Party.

Mary, to your question, you know, I was thinking about my experiences with President Nixon. And of course, that was the early to mid-1990s, before we had social media, before we had big tech, before we had cable news, really. And I remember one day, I walked into the office and he was sitting in the corner of his office with his feet up, and he didn't hear me come in. He was reading the A section of "The New York Times." When I walked in, he was angrily, and out of great frustration, balling up the entire A section of "The New York Times." And he saw me over his glasses, and he sort of playfully tossed it at me, and he said, "Monica," and used some profanity, but he said, "Monica, it is a miracle that any of us get elected to anything at all ever, given the inherent bias in the press."

Now, again, this was before the advent of big tech and all of the resources and big money that goes along with Silicon Valley. So, I think, you know, there's been a lot of really interesting and important conversation here about the CCP and China, TikTok, and so on. What I hear from the Republican base, what I hear when I travel around the country, and I'm sure Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador O'Brien hear this, too, all the time, is there is a sense that as great as these external threats are to all of us, the CCP, Iran pursuing a nuclear weapon, Vladimir Putin, you name it, that the greatest threat we all face is the weaponization of our own government against us.

And it's one thing if you've got the IRS targeting conservatives, but when you pair DOJ, FBI, DHS, DNI, IRS, when you pair all of that, the fearsome power of the U.S. government with big tech, and you weaponized it to that degree to silence speech, now

you've got a monolithic control over the discourse and the flow of information. And that is a hallmark of tyranny. Every tyranny in the history of the world has done exactly that. And we cannot believe that here we are in the 21st century and it is happening here in the United States of America. So, it is a huge question because not only are we facing these external threats and the whole speech debate with regards to China and so on is absolutely critical, but we're facing these domestic enemies using it against us as well.

And so, what is the answer to this? I think, any Republican running for any office going forward has to address this head-on, and hold these players accountable and find the right policy prescriptions in order to do that. It is a very dangerous moment for this country, but also for the West because we're seeing it now not just happen in the United States, but across the Western world.

Mary Kissel: Well, Congressman Khanna, I don't know if you want to respond to that. The floor is yours if you'd like to respond. If not, we've got a lot of other seminar members with questions for you.

Cong. Khanna: Well, Monica, I appreciate the kind words about the Twitter file. I guess, I would say that the aspiration when Silicon Valley started was actually a counter-cultural view of empowering individuals to have a voice, who wouldn't have had a voice. And it still could do that. Look, I believe that neither Barack Obama nor Donald Trump would have been elected President if it weren't for social media. And Bernie Sanders' voice wouldn't have been as loud, and you probably wouldn't have AOC and Matt Gaetz or Marjorie Taylor Greene as much of a voice.

So, in one sense, social media has the power to empower people who wouldn't have a voice. And we no longer have Walter Cronkite just telling us the truth, and that may be a good thing. But it's important for Americans to believe that it's fair, that the government doesn't have a thumb on the scale, and that these tech companies are truly viewpoint neutral. And I've committed to [inaudible 00:31:31] I have any influence in Silicon Valley to standing for those principles because the alternative is just going to further divide us as Americans.

Amb. O'Brien: Mary, can I jump in?

Mary Kissel: Yes.

Amb. O'Brien: So, the point I want to make, I'm going to stand up for the big tech companies here. It's not going to be popular, it wouldn't be popular in the stump. But when the FBI comes to a tech company, because there's a serious concern like Secretary Pompeo raised about a foreign actor involved and that tech company are hacking into that sort of thing, that's a legitimate use of the FBI or one of our law enforcement agencies coming to big tech and saying, "Hey, we've got a problem with

the Chinese. The Iranians are publishing all kinds of things recently on Twitter that probably shouldn't be on there." That's where the FBI has a proper role, or the CIA, or one of the regulatory agencies, to work with our tech companies to make sure they're alert and aware of the threats.

But when they come in and have political perspectives, and I think with these Twitter files, one of the things that's amazing is there was nothing from congress. None of the elected leaders in congress were telling them to do this. The elected leader of the executive branch, President Trump, certainly wasn't telling them to do this. These were unelected bureaucrats who were coming in and determining what could be on Twitter. So, there was no direction from an elected leader even. And it's a little scary, but pardon me, I can't blame the tech companies. If the FBI comes in with a badge and a gun with the DOJ behind them and tells you to do something, it takes a lot of courage to stand up against them, to file a lawsuit, to seek judicial intervention, to push back because of all the tools that Monica pointed out.

So, I think the real scandal of the Twitter files isn't so much what the tech companies did in response to the federal government coming in and imposing their will on them. It's more the fact that there were unelected bureaucrats and law enforcement officers taking it upon themselves to put their thumb on the scale, and get involved in this political fight. And that's what we should be focused on as opposed to, you know, blaming Facebook or Twitter or Google, for example. Now, maybe they should have gone to the courts, maybe they should have taken a stronger stand, but that's tough to do against the federal government in the mind of the law enforcement agencies.

Mary Kissel: It's certainly...

Cong. Khanna: Ambassador O'Brien, if I may, I actually agree that there are legitimate uses of the FBI for these tech companies in terms of making sure there's not foreign influence and that there's not pedophilia and [crosstalk 00:34:10] outrageous crimes. But one thing I would just say [inaudible 00:34:13] all of you and Secretary Pompeo and others agree with, that the vast majority of people in the FBI, in the CIA, are honorable people who abide by the law, who do not have political bias. If there are bad apples, we need to deal with that. But I think the wholesale maligning of agencies that do an incredible job to keep America safe, does a disservice to those agencies.

Amb. O'Brien: No, Congressman, I agree with you. I don't think there are any stronger supporters of law enforcement than Mike or myself and the other members on this seminar. But we did have with the Twitter files some pretty shocking revelations. I don't think it represents most of the FBI or the CIA or the government agencies, but we've got to make sure that the people that engage in wrongful conduct are the ones that are

focused on. And at the same time, we shouldn't malign our tech companies because they went along with some bad acts from certain government officials.

Mary Kissel: Well, to wrench this back into the national...

Amb. O'Brien: I think the tech companies, they've got a bad reputation for some of the things that happened that...you know, it takes a lot of strength to stand up to some of the pressure that was put on them.

Mary Kissel: I want to wrench this back into the national security realm. And to your point, Ambassador, if you're the CEO of Twitter... And we hope Elon Musk is watching. He, too, should join us on this seminar someday. There is an argument to say, "You know what? We should have Chinese state propaganda on this platform." In fact, we should have every voice on the platform except for pedophilia, obviously, and the promotion of criminality, etc. Because Americans should see what they're saying, and they're smart enough to discern for themselves what they're going to believe and what they're not going to believe.

There was a recent study out, for instance, on Russian disinformation on social media. It said it had no impact whatsoever. The Chinese propagandists, they're not very convincing, at least not here in the United States. So, why not just let everybody have at it? Who wants to answer that? Mike Waltz, you've been quiet.

Cong. Waltz: Yeah. Mary, I was actually just going to push back a little bit, not to beat the last dead horse. But I'm not quite so sympathetic on big tech as I think Ambassador O'Brien is being because, you know, if we go back to just a few years ago with the Edward Snowden cases, right, big tech in the wake of that had...Apple in particular had no problem at all pushing back on the federal government. In fact, you know, one of the...I have all kinds of issues with Comey, but one of the hearings that kind of got overshadowed was when he was pointing to the thousands and thousands of phones they can no longer access to encryption that, you know, criminals are using that they could no longer have backdoors to or no longer have the keys to.

So, we've seen big tech stand up when it's in their interest or when I think it's against what tends to be left-leaning bias within the corporate boardrooms. But I think in this case, the FBI was pushing on an open door, and there was quite a willingness when it came to the election year, and when it came to things like believing that the Hunter Biden laptop was misinformation, when it came to banning any talk of origins of COVID as a conspiracy theory because that at the time, you know, Dr. Fauci was adamant that it was zoological. So, I think we have a real issue on collusion. I think Monica Crowley is absolutely right. This is incredibly dangerous, and I think this congress, this house is going to get to the bottom of it.

Mary Kissel: I certainly hope so. Kim Reed, where do you come down?

Kimberly Reed: Well, I'd like to take a step back for a second because our viewers who are members of the Nixon Foundation and the Nixon Library who are with us this evening, may not keep up to date day-to-day on everything happening in Washington. And I just want to give a big shout out to this seminar for having not only two Congressmen join us this evening, but to have the foresight to have one who regularly participates with us, Congressman Mike Gallagher. He's not here this evening, but he was just named the chair of the new select committee on China. And I think that just says so much about what we've discussed and where this select committee might go. I know Congressman Khanna and Waltz, I don't know if you're going to be named to that committee. I guess we'll find that out in a couple of days, but Congressman Waltz previously was on the precursor to that, which was a task force on China. And when I was chairman of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, I worked with this task force on China. I just want to commend to all the viewers that there was a report that was outcome of this in September of 2020. And looking specifically at some of the recommendations on science and technology, including maintaining U.S. presence in lower orbit in space, but other high tech recommendations I think fold nicely into the discussion that we have today. So, we look forward to seeing what this new select committee is going to be doing.

And I know there's two ways to win a marathon. You can run fast or you can trip the other guy. And when we look at TikTok and other things, I also hope that we encourage all we can U.S. companies and innovators to really take us to the next level. I'd just love to hear from both members of some things we can do to incentivize U.S. companies and future businesses to help us compete on this high-tech front.

Mary Kissel: How do we keep our edge, Congressman Khanna? How do we keep our edge, especially with all this talk about breaking up big tech?

Cong. Khanna: Mary, let me answer that wonderful question, but answer your first question about why should we care about a Chinese propaganda. Let me start by saying, I think the American people are much smarter than most pundits give them credit for. And it's common, once you lose an election, to start saying, "Well, the American people were manipulated." I think the American people are pretty wise. I think they don't necessarily get it right in every election, but over the long run, they do. I think they're very independent minded, and I think they're capable of independent thinking.

And we would never ban "The Communist Manifesto" from being read. We'd never ban Chinese literature from being read. We would never ban speech that Xi Jinping gave from being read or their ideas from being read. But that's not what's going on with some of the worst uses of TikTok. What you there have is subtle manipulation where people

are being targeted based on their data, fed things, particularly young people that are trying to influence them in subtle ways. And that's not free speech, that's manipulation. That is what I think the concern is. America can withstand any test of ideas, but we're not going to stand for the manipulation of propaganda, particularly to our young people. And I do think it's legitimate to stop that kind of propaganda infiltrating the United States.

On the competitiveness, I would just say, we have the best system in the world because we've got DARPA and NSF, and have produced incredible innovations. We've combined that with a free enterprise entrepreneurial system in some of the best academic institutions in the world. And I think I would hope there can be a bipartisan consensus as there was on the CHIPS and Science Act that I did with Todd Young — Mike Gallagher was involved, and Senator Schumer, President signed, Mitch McConnell supported it — that it would make fundamental investments in cutting edge technology, and that we ought to be incentivizing companies to be doing that research here, and having appropriate restrictions as Rob Portman pushed for that those developments don't then go to China or other countries.

Mary Kissel: Well, on that, you referenced China or other countries. Our entire discussion tonight has been about free speech in the United States, how it links to our national security, the threats both domestic and foreign. But what about what China is doing in other parts of the world, trying to push disinformation and manipulate our friends and allies? Is that a concern? Is that something we should care about, or are our problems here at home just so big that it's just something that is kind of not in the view of the U.S. government and not a problem we need to solve? Ambassador O'Brien?

Amb. O'Brien: Well, if you're traveling to Africa or Asia, one of the things that surprises you, or maybe it shouldn't surprise you, is the signs that are on every highway. This has been...you know, highway has been built by the People's Republic of China. Fiber optics being laid down all over East Africa by the Chinese, free Huawei 5G networks being provided to Latin American, Asian, African countries. So, the Chinese are relentless when it comes to tech, and they're voracious when it comes to hoovering up all their data that they can get because with machine learning now and AI, this isn't the old days of the Stasi where they had so many files and warehouses that people couldn't actually go through them and figure out what was in them.

Going to Mike Waltz' point about his aunt, with the tools that they have now, all of this data becomes incredibly valuable and useful to them. Again, they're seeking it not just here with TikTok, but they're seeking it with hardware and software, and apps and platforms all over the world. And so, you know, it's a concern. As Alex Gray pointed out, it's a civilizational concern. And we've got to be mindful of what's happening not just here with the CCP and not just with the attacks on Marriott or United Airlines because they put Taiwan on a map or the Houston Rockets because their general manager

posted a tweet in support of the Hong Kong protestors. But we've got to be cognizant of what's happening around the world with the Chinese attempting to gain global dominion and displacing the United States as the leading power in the world. And so, we've got a heck of a fight on our hands, and it's important here, but it goes beyond our borders, for sure.

Mary Kissel: And the fight seems to be in so many places, not least of which also international organizations, standard setting bodies. Congressman Khanna, the Biden administration had a win recently in getting our pick to run the International Telecommunications Union which basically regulates the guts of the internet. This is a fight that got very little attention here in the United States, but was an incredibly important achievement. Should we also be looking at things like standard setting organizations, international organizations? How important is that to ensure that we have the kind of free flow of information that we need so that the free world remains resilient?

Cong. Khanna: It's very important. I think we were a bit complacent, maybe resting on our laurels after we won the Cold War. And China was quietly staffing all of these international organizations with their bureaucrats. And that was a mistake. I personally believe it was a mistake to allow China into the World Trade Organization. They have not played by any of the rules while we and many of the countries in the West have. But I just think the mistake made was we underestimated their rise. But we see that now, and we need a course correction. And what I would say on Africa when I was in Africa, American policy is we want Africa to develop and do what Africans aspire to do. We don't seek sort of a neocolonial attitude. China is basically engaged in a form of soft neocolonialism where they will do something, put their name on it and dictate the future.

I think, of course, our model [inaudible 00:47:26] is someone whose grandfather spent four years in jail with Gandhi fighting for India's independence. I think the American model is a much, much, much better model for the leadership of the world. There's a reason millions of people want to come to America and not go to China. And so, I think our leadership in places like Africa is not just in our national interest. It's in the world's interest.

Mary Kissel: Well, we may have a better model, but if you're the leader of an African nation, Secretary Pompeo, and you're trying to build a telecommunications infrastructure, you know, a lot of times, it's just cheaper to go with the Chinese alternative where they suck up your data. But who cares? Right? You've got 5G in your national capital. I mean, even our partners like Saudi Arabia, Huawei's built out their telecommunications infrastructure. So, you know, if the battle really is about big data, AI, I mean, how do we compete there?

Sec. Pompeo: Yeah. Mary, you lived this along with us as we were trying to fight this very fight over a set of technologies, ZTE, Huawei, and the like, during our time. Yeah, it feels free when you have very few foreign exchange reserves and somebody shows up to give you the infrastructure. You know it's not free. You can feel that it's not free, but it shows up. And you know there'll be a cost, a price to pay later.

All that we can do is what we have historically done, is we can educate, we can offer alternatives. Sadly, as Ambassador O'Brien and Representative Khanna have spoken about, we haven't had an American alternative to so much of this technology for a long time. Forget competitive, forget price for a moment. There was choice China or nearly nothing else, say, for maybe Nokia and Ericsson were the solution. But certainly not an American one. So, there's lots of pieces. One of which is to make sure we have it here, that we have it right at home, that we have alternative options for all of these, not just African countries that are resource-limited.

But to your point, wealthy countries in the Gulf states, countries in Europe that could certainly afford to have technology that is consistent with their own national security and that of the West. We worked our tail off — Ambassador O'Brien, Matt Pottinger, our whole team out telling the truth, the real story about what they were doing, the risk that they were presenting to their own people and to their national security for putting this technology that was entrusted.

To this day, we've got Mung Chiang, who's now the University President at Purdue, and Keith Krach who are part of our team at the State Department, who were working on the concept of trusted networks. And as we think about the First Amendment and freedom, you need to have trusted networks. And we've kind of been dancing around this with big tech and the like. You have to have a systems processes technology that people can trust and come to rely on, to know that their information is not being stolen, and the information that is being transmitted is in fact viewpoint neutral.

I'll give you one more good example. You spoke about Chinese propaganda for a bit, Mary. You were close to this when you were working with me at the State Department. We booted a bunch of Chinese journalists out of the United States of America. It wasn't because we were afraid of what some journalist might write, who was a private citizen, but because these were Chinese government directed people under the façade, operating under the ruse that they were just good journalists telling the real truth. The Chinese would never permit a U.S. government actor to go into their country, do reporting, and then report inside of their own country.

And you remember, they kicked a few of ours out. You lived this life yourself for a while. But American national security depended on us making sure that the people who are here as reporters... And this gets back to some of the talk about the collusion between

government and the private sector. The framework in China is just different. There really is no such thing as a private Chinese company. And once you accept that, there's no such thing as a private Chinese media entity as well. And so, we should recognize that these fronts, these parts that are literally part of the united front are not journalists, these are not reporters, they are not using our First Amendment to be another voice. But they are seeking to exert Chinese influence inside of our country, Arab countries, African countries, Asian countries as well. And we need to make sure we never forget that our vision for, "Boy, that's just a good cub reporter," simply doesn't exist if someone's on the payroll of the Chinese Communist Party.

Mary Kissel: Congressman Waltz...

Amb. O'Brien: Mary, it felt like for a while that Kim Reed, and Secretary Pompeo, and Keith, and you and I were unpaid spokespersons for Nokia and Ericsson. I think they got a lot of free publicity from the group of [inaudible 00:52:19] Finnish, and Swedish, and Norwegian technology for a while.

Sec. Pompeo: Sad but true.

Mary Kissel: I just want to go briefly and quickly, because our time is running out, to the two Congressmen. So, we've talked about the breadth of this challenge, big tech, should it be broken up, should it not, how do we encourage free speech while protecting Americans, you know, what is the line that we draw when it comes to foreign actors? And I think Alex Wong made interesting remarks there about the lack of rights, actually, of foreigners and the way that we've regulated media companies on our soil.

But Congressmen Khanna and Waltz, are there other ways that we can encourage innovation here in America besides just throwing money at companies? Because everybody likes to throw taxpayer money at companies. I mean, it's not something that...

Cong. Waltz: Not everybody.

Mary Kissel: ...Capitol Hill is thinking about. Is that part of the discussion that you guys are having?

Cong. Waltz: Well, I just wanted to build on one previous point on Congressman Khanna's discussion of the CHIPS Act. I think another important component that we were able to negotiate into that is actually to protect the investments that we're making. And I've served as ranking member of research and technology on the science committee, and we were able to get in a full Thousand Talents ban across the board. Importantly, we were able to build in some mandatory training so that a lot of these researchers, it kind of takes the excuse away from them and saying, "Well, I didn't really

fully appreciate it." We gave the National Science Foundation and others some important tools to actually see the contracts, and to be able to demand any other types of contracts. So, I am all for these investments, but we can't credibly pour billions of dollars into our stem and research enterprises to watch it flow right out the backdoor.

And then the other piece is, you know, I'm proud to serve with Congressman Khanna as co-chairs of the U.S.-India Caucus. And so, I don't think the United States... We are going to have our hands full in so many areas that the Ambassador and the Secretary have laid out. We have fallen behind, that we're playing catch-up, and others we're trying to stay ahead or have parity. But what we do have is our friends and allies in so much capability that's developing in the Indian tech sector, in the Israeli tech sector and otherwise. However, we also collectively have to have those tough conversations with them as well.

I had a long conversation with then Prime Minister Netanyahu on their CFIUS regime and putting our tech sharing and intel sharing enterprises a threat if they don't protect it on the backend. And with that, I'll stop so that Representative Khanna can close us out.

Mary Kissel: Representative, over to you.

Cong. Khanna: Well, I'd just say, I enjoy co-chairing the India Caucus with Representative Mike Waltz, and working together with him on a number of issues as well as Representative Gallagher. And I wish there was more people like them in congress, where even though you can have vociferous disagreements and you can pull up some of our arguments in the Armed Services Committee to know that we don't always agree. We can find common ground when it comes to America's national security and purpose.

I agree with Mike on one of the points he made about working with allies. And this administration when they restricted semiconductor sales, when Biden did to China, we need to make sure that Japan and Netherlands and other companies also adopt those restrictions, or we're basically going to help those companies at the expense of American companies. So, I think it's very important for us to be coordinated with our allies when we have these restrictions.

And on this point, you said, "What is going to help make sure America stays ahead, stays more innovative?" Look, we're the most innovative country in the world. That's just factual. What led to Bell Labs producing the semiconductor transistor? What led to us inventing the GPS? What led to us inventing the internet? I think it partly was a sense of common national purpose. There was a sense that America needed to win the Cold War, and America needed to be the main economy because of our way of life. And I guess, my sense is, how do we restore that sense of national purpose, the sense that we need to be the production leader, we need to be the leader in new technologies?

And I think, in a political context, I still think politics matters extraordinarily because it sends a signal to people about what to be inspired about. If we do that, I think we'll have young people and people going into innovation, and make those innovations. I think that's our challenge as political leaders at this time.

Mary: Thank you, Congressman. Just always at the end, to the two co-chairs, if you have any final remarks, or should we let that be the final word?

Sec. Pompeo: I think, let our guest have the final words. It's most appropriate, Mary.

Mary Kissel: Wonderful.

Amb. O'Brien: Buy Mike's book.

Mary Kissel: Wonderful. Well, our deep thanks to you, Representative Khanna. To our co-chairs, our seminar members, Nixon Foundation team, and all of you watching, you can follow us across social media, hear us on podcast, watch us on radio, listen to us...or watch us on TV, listen to us on radio. Getting tired. That's it for this month's Nixon Seminar on Conservative Realism and National Security. I'm Mary Kissel. Good night.