

Man: President Nixon and the nation's governors met in Washington today to discuss what the president called indeed a national problem, drugs. He proposed a nationwide campaign of education waged at the community level. David Shoemaker [SP] reports.

David: It was an unlikely setting for a psychedelic happening, the president, vice president, cabinet officials, and the nation's governors, all meeting at the State Department to worry together over the drug problem, or the drug scene, depending on your age.

President Nixon: I have learned a lot in these presentations. I must say that when they first started, I thought the answer was more penalties. I thought that the answer was simply enforce the law and that will stop people from the use of drugs, but it isn't that. When you're talking about 13-year-olds and 14-year-olds and 15-year-olds, the answer is not more penalties, the answer is information. The answer is understanding.

David: Then Mr. Nixon and the leading men of the nation, the establishment, if you will, settled back with their families for an indoctrination film prepared by the Defense Department. The tone may have been know your enemy, but it was a happening nevertheless with fairly strong statements against the war, government, religion, and hypocrisy.

Morgan: Well, hello, everyone. My name is Morgan Ortagus, and I'm the founder of POLARIS National Security and the former State Department spokesperson. And I have the honor of being your host for tonight's Nixon Seminar. As you may have guessed, that was Richard Nixon talking about his policy on drugs on December 3rd, 1969 in a weekly news summary.

So, for tonight's Nixon Seminar, we will definitely have a lively conversation, and it will be on the relationship between the United States and our neighboring countries at our southern border and beyond. We will be covering border security, the fentanyl crisis, and cartel-driven immigration and violence, and why it's crucial to understand how these issues fit into a 21st century national security grand strategy. We, of course, have always the honorable former secretary of state, Michael R. Pompeo, and also the honorable Ambassador Robert O'Brien, who was President Trump's national security advisor as well.

I'm going to turn it over to my former boss, Secretary Mike Pompeo. I almost said senator. That was maybe a Freudian slip. Mr. Secretary, to give your opening thoughts on these issues.

Mike: Oh, goodness, Morgan. Thank you, and thanks, everyone, for joining us this evening. You know, as I think back on how we approached this for four years, I was involved in policy when I was the CIA director, with significant operation trying to assist the president in figuring out how to address these threats that were very close to home. And we had Chief Kelly as our chief of staff to start out right who had been the commander of Southcom. So, we had lots of knowledge in the room about this.

And yet, we...where administrations, they get wrapped up in the problem of the day, there are big crises around the world, and this often becomes the second, third, or fourth thing. For us, it was a little bit different. No

one can forget that President Trump focused in his campaign on building a wall and stopping illegal immigration from coming into our country. And then as our time moved on in the increasing crisis, not only from the caravans that had begun to build in the south, but fentanyl that had begun to make its way from China through Mexico. We could see that this was something we were going to have to continue to deal with.

Lastly, we knew that the security challenge there was real. And so, we confronted Maduro in Venezuela by recognizing Juan Guaidó as the rightful president, right? Maduro had essentially stolen an election. We denied that that was appropriate under international law, and we provided real firepower, real support to this fellow in an effort to get Maduro to leave. We ultimately...the administration indicted him on narcotics charges before we departed. And then we should know even closer to home in Cuba, we put in place better policies that gave the Cuban people a real opportunity.

And maybe that's the place to end my opening remarks. We were always focused on trying to make life better for the folks in Chile, the folks in Peru, folks in Venezuela. I think, Robert, you did. I know that I went. I'm sure many other seniors in the administration, we went to that port, and we watched the people fleeing from Venezuela on that bridge. We could see that we were on not only the right side of American national security, but on the right sides of protecting and friend to create human dignity all throughout the region.

We had a moment where conservative governments were pretty successful. We developed a deeper relationship with Brazil. But as we began to leave, you could see the first inklings of what we've now seen: leftist governments, socialist governments taking over in Argentina, Mexico certainly moving in that direction, creating even more risk, and less ability for the United States to have influence while the Chinese Communist Party is trying to exert its.

Anyway, I'll stop there. Thank you, Morgan.

Morgan: I remember being on that bridge with you, sir, in Cucuta. And I think, in fact, one of your most popular pictures on Instagram as secretary of state was from that trip and you were holding the young children that had fled, right, from this terrible regime. So, we all remember your work there well, sir.

Ambassador O'Brien, you know, one of the things that I hear when I'm talking to the average American is they don't understand how all of us, this whole team and so many of us who work in foreign policy, get so enthralled with what's going on in Afghanistan or Ukraine or other parts of the world. And we seemingly sort of forget in the average American's mind to talk about the things that matter to them most like our southern border. Why do you think that is, and how did you and the Trump administration sort of right that focus to be on the border our number one national security challenge?

Robert: Well, thank you, Morgan. I echo all the secretary's comments as well. My first day as national security advisor, I met with the president

in Los Angeles. I joined him on the Air Force One, and we flew directly to the border. And the one person who never forgot about the border being our number one national security problem was the President of the United States. And we went to the border, and we were making tremendous progress building a wall there. Now, though the wall isn't the only answer, but securing that border is a critical component of our national security. It's not just the drugs, which I'll talk about in a moment, it's cultural artifacts that are being dug up from the ground [inaudible 00:11:13]. It's human trafficking, it's labor trafficking, it's this horrible sex trafficking especially with children. That border needs to be secured, and that security will help us on our side of the border, but it'll also protect especially minors and women on the other side of the border. And so, border security is critical.

Number two, I think the reason the president didn't forget about this issue and Americans think about it and ask questions of why are we in Afghanistan and we're not battling opioids and fentanyl in Iowa and Ohio and Utah and Oklahoma. We need to. [inaudible 00:11:48] 100,000 Americans are dying every year. More people are dying every year than died in the entire Vietnam War from fentanyl overdoses. I didn't want to call them overdoses because a lot of these are kids who think they're buying Adderall at school to get an edge on tests and they're getting some fentanyl products that's killing them. And as Secretary Pompeo pointed out, that's the Chinese Communist Party. They're sending the precursors for all that fentanyl right through Mexico, right up over our borders. It's a reverse opioid war against us. We've got to interdict and intercept those fentanyl precursors before they get to Mexico.

And the third, we need to look at our economic advantages. As we decouple from China, there's an opportunity to bring our supply chains home. One of the great advantages we had in COVID were all the factories that were working in Mexico, those supply chains didn't stop. And we had a good relationship with the Mexican government, much better relationship than the Biden administration has today. Because AMLO respected strength, he respects President Trump, he respects Mike Pompeo. Mike had a terrific ambassador, Chris Landau, down in Mexico, number one in his class at Harvard, spoke fluent Spanish. He and Mike worked very closely together on that relationship. And we got a lot done with the Mexican government.

So, you know, A, we need border security. B, we need to interdict the flow of fentanyl coming in from China in international waters, territorial waters. That's piracy. We need to board those ships and take them down before they get to Mexico. And then number three, we need to work with our partners not just in Mexico, but in the rest of Latin America.

I went to Brazil, I went to Colombia, I went to Panama, like the secretary did, to increase those...improve those relationships, increase our diplomacy with those countries, but also open the door for American businesses. As we move factories away from China, if they can't be on-shored here in America and we need cheaper labor, we could do it in Latin America. So, I think those three things will give us a big head start. So, thank you and great to have you moderating time, Morgan.

Morgan: Thanks, ambassador. I'm going to jump right into our panel and get the discussion going. I'm going to start with my very good friend, Monica Crowley, who was assistant secretary for public affairs at the Treasury, and have a long national security background even before that.

You know, Monica, Ambassador O'Brien was just talking about some of the economic impacts. When we think about bringing...near-shoring our supply chains as opposed to being so dependent on the Chinese Communist Party for our security and for our critical minerals and other supply chain needs, I want you to talk about that. But I also am hoping too that you could also pivot and educate us on the billions of dollars that the cartels are making in these human smuggling operations. And I know the Treasury has a lot of authorities on the books. Are we appropriately using them? Can we be doing more from a Treasury perspective?

Monica: Well, it's great to be with all of you tonight. Morgan, thank you so much. Mr. Secretary, Ambassador O'Brien, everybody, it's great to see everyone tonight. There's huge economic impact, obviously, to having open borders. And as you pointed out, Morgan, the supply chain situation is absolutely critical. One of the things that the Trump administration really focused on with regard to trade was trying to bring back American manufacturing, bringing back American jobs that have been off-shored particularly to China. And the administration had enormous success with that. I think it was about 500,000 manufacturing jobs brought back to the United States over the course of those four years. Very, very significant.

But I think what the pandemic showed in bold relief is that we can't rely on China. We can't rely on these supply chains. And I think, not just official Washington is coming to realize that, but most of the American people as well because they can't buy the products that they're so used to buying with ease. So, I think there's increasing political pressure coming from the American people to rectify that imbalance, the trade imbalance with China, obviously, but with other trading partners as well, to try to bring back as much of the supply chain as we can in American manufacturing here at home.

I also want to say that, you know, under the Trump administration, what was clear is that if you don't have borders, you don't have sovereignty. And if you don't have sovereignty, you don't have a country. And Joe Biden actually threw all of those policies into reverse quite deliberately, and if they weren't deliberate, then he should have course-corrected by now and he has not. So, that tells you that all of this is by design.

I think, too, when you're looking at the flow of drugs, when you're looking at the infiltration of 7 million, I think, illegal aliens just over the last 2.5 years, including a lot of Chinese nationals coming into the country, you've got this massive human tsunami coming in that is cutting American wages because you've got this shadow economy that's growing with all of this illegal labor flowing into the country. So, it's certainly having a major impact on our labor force in this country and depressing wages as it always has, but now it's really gotten very extreme because of the number of people coming in in a very short amount of time. I do think so much of this is the Chinese Communist Party working hand-in-glove with the cartels and frankly the policy of the Biden administration

to undermine the United States. These wide open borders are a direct national security threat, but also an economic threat as well.

Treasury does have a lot of tools at its disposal, obviously, sanctions and a whole range of other tools. Biden administration has refused to use any of them with regard to the cartels. And we see a lot of...there's a lot that can be done in terms of banking, the banking system, etc., with regard to the cartels. The administration has done nothing with regard to that. So, obviously, I have no confidence that the administration will change its tune between now and January of 2025, Morgan, which is really unfortunate. Because the cartels don't just have operational control of our southern border and are making billions and billions of dollars per year courtesy of the Biden administration's wide open border policy, but there's no penalization. There's no penalties for their actions whatsoever. So, of course, they're going to continue to do so at the great detriment to the American people and our safety and our security.

Morgan: Well, let's continue on that great economic conversation that we just had and turn it over to Kim Reed who has a lot of experience here as well. Kimberly, we were just talking at the beginning of this conversation about near-shoring and how we can bring some of our critical supply chains either back to the U.S. or to our friendly neighbor countries. Can you talk to us more? I mean, that was actually kind of your job, some of the things that you worked on in the last administration.

Kimberly: Absolutely. And I just want to take a moment for all of the Nixon Foundation and Library members. Many of us had the honor of attending the Nixon National Energy Conference two weeks ago, where we talked about President Nixon's very first for America, our very first energy policy. We celebrated the 50th anniversary of that in some very thoughtful discussions over a day and a half. It was very fascinating. And everyone can watch that on Zoom.

But as you know, Morgan, I had the honor of serving as the head of the Export-Import Bank of the United States. And EXIM helps the world buy American. And of course, we want to near-shore with our ally of Mexico. And so, the very last deal that I put forth to our board of directors at EXIM during the Trump administration on January 14th, 2021 was a deal where we would export to Mexico oil and gas turbines and compressors, which was a deal of about \$70 million, and 200 jobs will be supported by the export of this equipment from California, Louisiana, and Texas.

Of course, there's always more that we can be doing. And both U.S. and Mexican businesses should find more ways to collaborate and continually build supply chains and help grow not only our industrial base, but also Mexico's. I was very cognizant of China and their presence in Mexico, and their own push into Latin America with their Belt and Road Initiative, and also particular way to reach the U.S. market without tariffs under the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement.

So, we hope that good economic work will continue with Mexico going forward, but we have a big, big crisis on our border. And I'm just going to say it, I really hope that President Biden and Vice President Harris go and spend more time at the border and they understand because we want our

companies to be able to trade with confidence. But this drug problem is absolutely destroying our country. And I did not work on that topic, but I have seen it firsthand, and I really applaud all of those who worked on that in the prior administration. And I just hope that we really have an answer.

I know that we saw just in the press today that President Biden is going to be sending some National Guard troops to the border. But I want economic success to happen, and it doesn't happen if we don't have security.

Morgan: I think you're right, Kim. You know, like Secretary Pompeo and Ambassador O'Brien, I spent some time on the campaign trail in the fall, helping some Republican candidates. And when you're on the campaign trail, it is shocking how you meet so many people...almost everyone you meet has had someone somewhere in their families or their lives affected by this fentanyl and drug crisis.

I'm going to turn it back over to Secretary Mike Pompeo before he has to run. Sir, one of the things that was really interesting, I remember when Obrador won the election in Mexico, this was a pretty far left man that was being elected. There was a lot of speculation in the United States, how in the world was President Trump going to get along with this leftist president that was coming into Mexico? And the wild thing, in many ways, is I think that President Trump had a better relationship with Obrador than currently Biden and his team do. How did you manage? We know that you were pulling all the strings behind the scenes. How did you manage to make that happen?

Mike: Well, that's not [inaudible 00:22:51]. It was a team effort. It was certainly a team effort. I did have a fantastic ambassador down there. Had great leadership at the regional level, too, Kim Breier, who was running the western hemisphere for us.

What mattered was that he understood that we were going to do things to try to help him. When I watch the current administration say, "We're just going to go throw money into Central America, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras," the Mexican leadership knows that's not going to solve a problem which is very much theirs.

It is often hard for them to admit it, but you know, the cartels in this ungoverned spaces and in their best interest to either they need a lot of assistance. And so, it was complicated, but we were able to make the case that we were actually there trying to make his job easier. I had a counterpart, Marcelo Ebrard, who was a really good guy, also a committed socialist. But make no mistake about it, he understood that America was going to use its power in a way that protected American interest in the region.

Last thought on this. We never forgot too – and that was when I was reading the materials preparing for this – the importance of faith in Latin America. President Nixon often talked about the Catholic Church. There is now a massive explosion of evangelical Christians in the region as well. We need those institutions supporting greater autonomy for and

greater liberty for their people, and making them understand that, you know, basic human dignity, basic property rights matter to them as well. And we should never underestimate especially in Central America and Latin America the power of churches to help governments like ours help them all get it right.

Morgan: That's great. Thank you, sir. I appreciate that.

Mike: Thanks, Morgan.

Morgan: One of the things... Thank you. One of the things Alex Wong, my former colleague at the State Department...one of the things that was mentioned earlier in this discussion, I think it was by Kim or maybe by Monica, was the influence of China in this region, in Latin America, in South America. You're an expert on Asia. In fact, I very vividly remember my first Friday night whenever Kim Jong Un got bored and decided to shoot some things off and I ran hurriedly to the situation room at the State Department and you were briefing me. We did not know there would be a lot more of that that evening. But I say that to say you know China, you know Asia. Describe for us how they have been successful. We're all aware of this, but how they have been successful in strengthening their own influence right in our backdoor.

Alex: Right. But before I get to that, I do remember that night, too. It was a Friday night. Morgan, we were both called back to the State Department Ops Center. I was settling into a nice dinner party with my wife, but that's life at the State Department when you're dealing with North Korea. Anyway, it was a lot of fun.

But you're right. Look, China is looking at Latin America, looking at our neighborhood, you know, not so much as a priority theater in my view. But they're looking to put in economic beach heads, secure their own supply chains of key minerals that they use in electric battery production, in solar panel production, in other large refining capacities where they're trying to corner the market or at least get a large majority of the market to enhance their strategy of enhancing our dependency and the dependency of the wider world on China's manufacturing and refining capability.

So, they're trying to secure those relationships with countries in our own hemisphere, where they're...and it's not always by the most legitimate means. China has no qualms about using tools of elite capture, tools of corruption, to be frank. They care not of constitutional government, liberty, and democracy, and are fine with authoritarianism where decisions can be made in backrooms together with the Chinese. So, that's something we definitely have to watch out for.

But I think the corollary for the United States there is, in the same way as China looks at our own hemisphere as an opportunity, as an economic opportunity, a strategic opportunity, we should do the same. Yes, we have problems. Yes, we have issues. And I think a great failing of the current Biden administration is that because of their policies, we are forced to look at Latin America and our border as issues and threats. We should be looking at it as opportunities. As you've mentioned and as Kim has mentioned, there are resources in areas there where we can work together

with our partners to create supply chains that enhance our own resiliency, enhance our own prosperity, whether it's in minerals, whether it's in energy, or other areas. We should be doing the same thing the Chinese are doing, but doing it in a rubric where we are leveraging our shared heritage, our shared commitment to liberty and democracy, which is shared among the hemisphere, and the deep personal connections we have from people to people.

One-fifth of America's population draws their ancestry from Latin America, and a majority of those folks are first or second generation. There are strong and deep links, we have advantages, and we should, again, be looking at Latin America as an opportunity. But as Kim said, we have to deal with the threats first so we can really magnify and seize the opportunities.

Morgan: That's great. Thank you, Alex. You know, for my colleagues, Bridge Colby, John Noonan, of course, Ambassador O'Brien, I really want to get into a discussion, maybe even a debate on the potential military angle of this. But Bridge, before we get into a deep discussion on the military side, I've got to hear your thoughts on what Alex just said, and what your perspective is. You're a China expert. What are they doing in Latin America, and can we check them?

Elbridge: Well, thanks, Morgan, and thanks for your superb moderation. I think we're all fortunate to be in your capable hands here this evening. So, my thanks as well. I think, just on that point, I think there's a...I agree with Alex that there are...you know, I mean, I have personal links myself. But I think we shouldn't exaggerate the natural or native orientation towards United States. If you look at the...and I know Alex was not saying this. I think he would associate himself, if I could say, with what I'm about to say. The primary trading partner of most of the Latin countries especially if you get essentially south of Colombia, is actually China. In a sense, they are sort of often kind of naturally paired with the Chinese economy because they're resource-heavy, you know, food stuffs, minerals, petroleum, oil, and gas, etc.

And so, you know, you can see that, obviously, the whole hemisphere is basically under left-wing government at this point. But, you know, governments like Lula in Brazil, in Chile now, in Colombia, they are looking more to China. You know, ironically, I think they are actually potentially putting themselves in the position of the kind of dependency that Latin Americans have traditionally complained about vis-à-vis the United States and Europe.

Unfortunately, that seems to be happening. But I think we're... I think we all agree, I'm sure, that we can't take Latin America for granted. I mean, Mexico is obviously a special case given it's a neighbor and it's sort of a tragic, you know, sort of situation. I mean, all the pluses and minuses of our history with Mexico. But I think as we get farther into Latin America, I think the Chinese have a lot of momentum, and I think that's going to be...it's not going to be easy to arrest or reverse that. I think it's going to take more positive thought.

I think people like Chris Landau and a number of people have [inaudible 00:30:32] is the kind of thinking that we need where we think about this context in a national interest point of view, in the context of great power competition. Because, I think, you know, there is a tendency, and everybody always decries it, to think of Latin America in a sort of afterthought way and that's true. You know, it's been going on for generations for reasons that are...you know, I think, Morgan, you suggested that often are defensible from a foreign policy point of view. But nonetheless, I think the region is more up for grabs than we have sort of seen at least since sort of the height of the Cold War.

Morgan: So, let's talk a little bit about some of the things, John Noonan, that we've been hearing come out of the Senate and out of some politicians, Republican politicians, where they have talked about, we talked at the beginning of this conversation, and Monica so eloquently laid out, so many challenges that we have at the border. There has been proposals and initiatives by some senators, by some Republican politicians that we should perhaps authorize new military force. Would that actually work? I mean, how does the [inaudible 00:31:42] guys go house to house in Mexico City? Is that going to work?

John: I think you accurately framed what the intent of the legislation is. First of all, I know I've been away for several months. It's good to be back and see my friends. Believe it or not, I have missed the monthly Nixon seminars. I'm happy to be here with you all.

I think it's worth detailing just very briefly that the military is already very involved in the counter-narcotics mission predominantly through the principal combatant command, U.S. Southern Command. And that involves things like Navy destroyers and helicopters, Coast Guard cutters, Navy littoral combat ships, maritime patrol aircraft, etc. and so forth. We even throw some of our advanced Air Force airborne radars at the problem. And I think that's proper, just given the amount of narcotics that are creeping its way up over the border and the number of Americans that it's killing every year.

So, the rationale for the AUMF against the Mexican drug cartels, which was a proposed bill introduced by Congressman Crenshaw and Congressman Waltz...Special Forces veterans both of them, Crenshaw was SEAL, Waltz, a Green Beret. The rationale is very simple. Fentanyl kills over 100,000 Americans a year. It is akin to a WMD going off in our country annually. There has been an insidious shift from plant-based narcotics by the cartels, think coca turned into cocaine, opioids turned into heroin, etc. into this synthetic model where they make fentanyl, the predominant synthetic narcotic. And it's also the most deadly. That's a policy change, if cartels have policy. And it's had deadly effects in the U.S.

China sends their precursor materials for the synthetic drugs to the Mexican cartels usually through an intermediary, Guatemalan, Honduran financier or sometimes Mexican themselves. And the cartels then manufacture the drugs, run them over the border. What makes this a little sticky is that we're not necessarily dealing with an honest partner or a normal partner in the Mexican government. We know that they are complicit at the highest levels of their government in the trade and with the cartels. And

that makes it difficult for us to stop the drugs before they get here. The military is mostly in what you'd...an NFL [inaudible 00:34:30] called prevent defense, trying to keep the drugs from making their way up over the border rather than going in and stopping them from being manufactured or stopping them from even starting the journey in the first place.

One of the problems of the Biden...one of the many problems of the Biden administration's border policy is that they've grown so lax on the border that our custom border officials are absolutely overwhelmed. They're overwhelmed with refugees, they're overwhelmed with illegal immigrants. And these are fertile conditions for the cartels to ingress fentanyl and other narcotics into the country.

So, that's all a long background of saying, we don't really have a faithful partner in the Mexican government. We are completely on the defensive. So, what do we do? How do we get at the problem? I don't want to go so far as to say I'm going to take a position on the Crenshaw-Waltz bill. I can see the justification for going in and doing limited things like you said, Morgan, sending the Special Forces to Sinaloa or some of these drug manufacturing regions, having Predator orbits above the manufacturing regions, doing precision strikes, etc.

On the other hand, we're not making a Western here. The American people are largely...I think they're largely fatigued by new conflicts. And we do a trillion dollars of trade with the Mexican government every year. So, it's not so cut and dry. It's a sticky wicket. The military does have a purpose, and if you use them in an offensive way, they will do it very effectively. The question is, is the juice worth the squeeze? And I'll finish with, the military really has its hands full right now both with the rise in China and all the support that they're giving to the Ukrainian effort against the Russians. So, I think we need to be extra judicious about throwing other missions that are going to drain our dwindling munition stockpiles, for example, and dwindling resources, and our most at-ready forces away from commitments that we already have.

Alex: Hey, Morgan. Can I...

Morgan: So the audience could hear... Yeah, go ahead, Alex.

Alex: Can I jump in?

Morgan: Yeah, please.

Alex: You know, I agree with everything that John is saying. The difficulty at the tail end of the production process of stopping this flood of fentanyl. But, you know, a part of the solution and this will be known to many on this seminar, has to go back to China with these precursors. And many of you may remember that during the Trump administration, the diplomatic win where we managed to persuade the Chinese to add fentanyl products to their schedule of controlled substances. That at least for a time stemmed the flow of direct export of fentanyl to the United States, and numbers went down, overdose numbers went down as well at the end.

But now, these precursors continued to flow into Mexico. So, there needs to be a renewed diplomatic effort, renewed pressure campaign on Beijing and not just from the United States, but from Mexico, from other countries that are affected by this trade. Mexico does not have an interest in the cartels turbocharging their coffers with cheap Chinese precursors. We need to get the Chinese government to enforce laws and do so rigorously and crack down on these precursor manufacturers.

Now, they may say it's difficult. They may say it's hard to find these manufacturers. They may say these are dual use substances. But the Chinese government, if they have any ability, they have the ability to control their citizens and control businesses. They show that on a daily basis. So, that needs to be the renewed effort. It needs to be multilateral, and get it at the source because it is very hard to get it when it's up against our border.

Morgan: Yeah, absolutely.

Monica: Morgan, can I just jump in?

Morgan: Sure, go ahead. I love it. Go, Monica.

Monica: Okay. Thanks, Morgan. I just want to pick up on something that Alex said because, I mean, this is critical. Can't have this conversation without talking about China. China has been expanding its influence in our backyard for a really long time right out of the Soviet playbook with, you know, the Cuban Missile Crisis and the Soviets right there 90 miles off of our shore. CCP has now picked up that playbook, and they are literally right on our border, and in many ways infiltrating our country as well.

But I think back to the 1999 treatise written by two PLA colonels called "Unrestricted Warfare." And, you know, our enemies always tell us exactly who they are, what they believe, and what they intend to do. They never make it a mystery. When you go back and look at "Unrestricted Warfare," this is all part of it, right? This is all part of it. And I understand diplomats, I understand Official Washington being very reticent to call what we are seeing coming from China in terms of fentanyl and Chinese nationals pouring into the country, the spy balloons overhead, etc., as acts of war. I understand the reticence not to do that.

But if you go back and look at the Chinese approach, these actually are acts of war. And, you know, we certainly don't have an administration now that is prepared to deal with this in an aggressive kind of way, certainly not this president. But looking ahead to the future to a change of leadership, we absolutely need that. We need a far more aggressive approach to China because this kind of soft tyranny is ruling all over us.

Morgan: I'm going to get Ambassador O'Brien back in, but first, I'm going to get Bridge Colby to follow up on this military discussion and China discussion. I know that you have thoughts, Bridge.

Elbridge: Well, thanks, Morgan. I'd just like to associate myself with John's comments. I think the way he laid it out is exactly the way I would recommend that we think about it, which is, I mean, if we could solve this

problem productively or address it or make progress against it with the use of military force, I think it would make a ton of sense. But the question is, is the juice worth the squeeze? And I mean, I think, as we look historically, we have had a long history of intervention in place including in Mexico. And I think we found as well as in places like Afghanistan, it is very difficult. And that's not a hand-wringing kind of comment, but especially given the change in narcotics production and so forth, it's going to be harder to stamp that out, obviously. I'm not sort of, like, just kind of, like, being futile about it. I think that's a very real possibility. And I think we do have to consider that the Mexican government, despite being a great problem, I mean, this is also a familiar territory if you go to Afghanistan or South Vietnam or Iraq. Like, we have to consider what the realistic alternatives are.

I think it is a national security threat. A hundred thousand people are being killed every year. It's interesting to watch that clip and you got President Nixon kind of saying...you know, he basically is kind of saying subtext, yeah, some 13-year-olds are smoking weed in the back, whatever, it's not the end of the world. We need to understand them. That's a much different world, and we might have different views about that or, you know, whatever. But that's a much different situation than as Ambassador O'Brien rightly put it.

You know, some kid accidentally taking fentanyl and getting killed, right? I mean, that's a totally different world that we're living in. That is a national security threat. And I totally agree with John's points about needing to [inaudible 00:42:05] our military 100%. But tens of thousands of people are getting killed, and it's just kind of striking even...I mean, we see back in the '70s, but you know, looking even back 15 years ago, the drug problem seemed to be in a much better place. I don't know when things started to go off the rails with fentanyl. I mean, there's been a lot of writing about that. But this is like a really serious...

Seems to me, and Monica was talking about this, the thing that we can control is the wall. I don't really understand why we wouldn't have really effective border security. I just don't get it. Because at least we could have some control and then we could have a policy. We could debate the policy, but at least we'd have control, right? I don't really get that. That doesn't involve attacking Mexican territory. We could debate about that, but it seems like the first step is to have effective border security. I imagine everybody agrees.

I get where Congressman Waltz and Congressman Crenshaw are coming from, but my question is more like are we going to end up on the other side of this in a better place, or in a worse place?

Morgan: Yeah. Well, one has to believe in a border, Bridge, in order to believe that the border should be policed. So, I'm [crosstalk 00:43:08].

Elbridge: I'm [crosstalk 00:43:08] with you, Morgan. I know.

Morgan: I know others want to jump in, but I got to get Ambassador O'Brien back in. You know, ambassador, I think we had so much to fix in the Trump administration as it related to the border. You would be on...whoever the

Republican nominee, you will be on their shortlist to do a myriad of things in the next administration. And when we look at the border and at the challenge that we've all been talking about here, it actually feels worse than what we inherited in January of 2017. So, can we even fix this if we were to be elected in January of '25?

Robert: Well, thank you, Morgan. Look, it's gotten far worse than what we inherited in 2016-2017. And the untrammelled access to America. It's not just Guatemalan immigrants and Honduran immigrants and refugees and Mexicans seeking a better way of life. You've got thousands of Chinese nationals, you got Iranian nationals, you got folks from every country in the world that some of which, you know, would like to do America harm. We've got a lot of Russians now coming over the border. So, we've got no control over our border. That's the problem.

I want to get back to this military issue because I think John Noonan laid it out very well. And we've got a history in this country of intervening militarily in Mexico and other Caribbean and Latin American countries. And we got to be cognizant of that. But I don't think we're talking about a Pancho Villa style punitive expedition where we're going to go and secure...do what Erdoğan did in Syria and secure 15 miles into Mexico and make that a no-go zone and that sort of thing.

At the outset of COVID, you'll recall we had intel that the cartels were going to start using the COVID crisis to put more drugs into America. And so, Bill Barr and I got together with Secretary Pompeo and others. And we decided that we had to do something, and that something was military. It was really having a wall at sea in the Caribbean and also in the Eastern Pacific down in Baja California.

Now, we had some opposition from DOD and from a certain political leader at DOD that didn't want to do that. But with the president's support, we got it through. We got seven frigates and Coast Guard cutters, big cutters. And we got our allies involved. We had a Dutch frigate that was in the Caribbean. We got a British Royal Fleet Auxiliary ship to get involved. And we captured during those first few months of COVID \$4 billion in cocaine over the baseline of what had been coming in. We created a real...as rich as the cartels were, 4 billion was a real blow to the cartels.

We can do things like that. We can interdict the flow of the precursors into Mexico. I mean, we're talking about China. And Bridge talks about this, I do, Alex does. We're always talking about reciprocity. Can you imagine if thousands and thousands of fentanyl pills were flowing into China from Taiwan or from the Philippines or from Japan? Do you think the PLA Navy and Air Force are going to allow that to happen? No way. We shouldn't allow it to happen in our hemisphere.

So, these are some of the things we can do, you know, without a Pancho Villa style raid. Now, one point that I think Mike Waltz would make and Dan Crenshaw would make if they were on the call today is that surprisingly these cartels are very small. The leadership of some of these cartels are...we're talking about 300 people. The Zetas are 30 or 40 leaders. I mean, they're relatively small organizations that have enormous

economic output, and their incredible amounts of wealth concentrated in a small number of hands.

With the expertise that we picked up in Afghanistan and Iraq, there ought to be some benefit to America from that expertise of Special Forces, expertise that we picked up working with the Mexican partners. And that's problematic as has been pointed out. There are things that we could do to eliminate a relatively small number of people, not to end the cartels, not to end the import of drugs, but to set them back dramatically. And so, I think there are some things we can do militarily that'll have an impact. It's short of an innovation in Mexico which I think we all know would be a very bad idea.

Final point is on this side of the border. The cartels have taken over swaths of Arizona, Texas, California. They're operating openly here. Cracking down the cartels here using our law enforcement, you know, from the federal level all the way down to round up these cartel members and deport them immediately and to crack down the cartels here in America is not something that's going to draw ire from Mexico and can't draw ire from Mexico. We need to secure our own side of the border as well when we're dealing with these folks. They've gotten so brazen with these open borders that they're literally operating in the open here in America. That's a shame for our country.

So, I think, using the Navy, using some of our older assets, the LCSs that aren't going to be in the front line on the conflict in the Black Sea and the South China Sea, using some of our Air Force assets that may not be frontline assets, but will provide us with plenty of firepower to interdict ships and planes coming in. Cracking down on the cartels on our side of the border and then giving the Mexicans the help they need with that hard fought and hard won experience from Special Forces operations in Afghanistan and the Middle East and the Global War on Terror, and turning that against the cartels. I think those are all things we can do that won't trigger the type of reaction of Mexico that concerns have been expressed about, and fair concerns.

Morgan: Absolutely. The great thing about this discussion is so many of you want to jump in. And so, John Noonan, I'm going to turn it over to you again. John, you're muted.

John: Of course. It's just like our other calls, Morgan. I have boomer energy over here. Just to pile on to both what Alex said, what Ambassador O'Brien said, what Bridge said, I think if... Ambassador O'Brien very, I think, accurately said, well, if Congressman Waltz and Crenshaw were here, this is how they would defend it. I do think that that's an idea worth at least exploring. I think what they would say is, the justification is there, given the sheer amount of deaths that we're seeing in the country annually. We are not talking about large scale maneuver formations with combined arms, jets, mechanized infantry, armor, etc. And doing something like having a Pred hit a meeting of cartel leaders with a Hellfire missile would send an awfully strong message both to the Mexican government and those complicit in this trade and to the rest of the world that the United States is serious about keeping its borders safe and serious about keeping its people safe.

However, if you are...I think it's worth looking at this through the lens of our number one adversary which is China, as outlined by...in a very good national defense strategy that some people on this call may have had something to do with several years ago. If you're China and you've figured out a way to essentially make money, weaken the United States internally, and then finally prompt an overreaction from the United States where there are repercussions on the U.S. economy, repercussions with one of the U.S. government's most important trade partner in Mexico, repercussions at the UN, and then a commitment of military forces elsewhere, even if it's a small amount of military forces, a commitment of those military forces elsewhere, that's a win-win-win for China. That's what they want, is they want an overreaction from us where it costs us economically, diplomatically, and ties up some of our military resources.

What they don't want is exactly what my good friend, Alex Wong, was saying which is stricter economic sanctioning, stricter targeting of some of these precursor chemicals, international consequences economically that don't just come from us. Ambassador O'Brien has it exactly right, the Dutch play in the Caribbean, the French play in the Caribbean, the British play in the Caribbean, it's not just the United States here. It's several powerful first world economies with good militaries. And what China doesn't want is that multifaceted, multi-tool approach that hits them where it hurts, which is in the pocketbooks and on the international diplomatic stage. So, I think I will conclude there, but we should be cautious.

Morgan: Kim or Alex, since we're getting near the end of the conversation, anything else that you want to bring into it?

Kim: So, I guess, I really want to encourage the American public to understand - I'm going to say it every chance I get - fentanyl is now the leading cause of death for Americans aged 18 to 45. And we are shouldering the brunt of this. I was just in New York City, and I live in Washington, DC. We're seeing these overrun cities' rampant crime. And also, I would say, taxpayers mounting costs. And I'm even seeing this in my own increase in insurance premiums because we're having to mount these costs for what's happening.

We must connect the dots and have all elected officials connect the dots of the root causes. And it is the border crisis, is the root cause of the fentanyl crisis because we have an open border. I was just Singapore, and I visited the wonderful National Museum there. And there is a section on the opium wars. And I really encourage people to study that history, and it's interesting to read that the Chinese officials made many attempts to stop illegal trade. And in 1839, the government ordered the British trade blockade. And you just study your history of that period. And we know that the Chinese Communist Party studies that history. We need to be very mindful of this.

And I just really want to say that Richard Nixon, President Nixon was so smart on Communist subversion. When he was in office back in 1969, he tasked Nelson Rockefeller to prepare a war...report on policy. And I just want to underscore, since this is the Nixon Foundation and Library that

even back in 1969, there was Mao's Communist forces in the hemisphere. And this report says that although they were relatively small in numbers, they were fanatically dedicated to use of violence and intimidation to achieve their ends. And the mystique of Maoism had appealed to roost the idealism of the young in us has been the means for widespread subversion. So, I really hope we get our hands around this. We can't have this be the leading cause of death of young people in our country.

Morgan: Well, Ambassador O'Brien, I know that all of us on this call are so grateful to you and Secretary Pompeo for putting these discussions together. And the one thing that I think is incumbent on all of us is to remember, no matter how much time, you know, Alex and Bridge and I and others spend obsessing about the Chinese Communist Party or threats around the world, Americans actually really care about having a border that is defended, a border that is secure, and not having to worry if their young person, as you pointed out, accidentally, you know, takes a pill they think that are going to help them with a test, that they're going to pass away from it. That's happening far too much in this country. There's clearly a lot that has to be done from a foreign policy perspective to fix our relationship with Mexico and the Northern Triangle countries. We don't seem to have gotten to the root causes that the vice president often talks about. Maybe she'll figure that out over the next few years. But ambassador, could you please close us out?

Robert: Well, look, I'm bullish on America. And we have these conversations and oftentimes my wife will come in and say, "You were really a Debbie Downer again." You know, we're dealing with China and Taiwan and Russia and Ukraine and the Iranians involved in terrorism all over the world and in the Middle East. We got North Korea that Alex and you mentioned. And yet the thing that makes me optimistic about the country is, I look at this small group... Just for example, you, Morgan, Kim, Monica, John Noonan who I could listen to on defense all day long and I have for many years, Bridge Colby who's on Twitter fighting the Twitter wars on China like nobody's business, Alex Wong, you know, of course, Secretary Pompeo and others who aren't with us tonight. You know, all of you bring so much to the table. You're going to be in government again, hopefully in two years, not six years from now. And when that happens, America is going to come roaring back.

The fundamentals...the country is not fundamentally weak. We're perceived by our adversaries as being weak, but we're fundamentally strong. And what makes us strong is this group of people that we're talking with now, but millions of other Americans that are willing to fight like heck for this country. We're coming back, and we're going to come back in a very short period of time. And I'm looking forward to seeing all of you in government and in office, and that's one thing that gives me a lot of hope. Whether it's the border, whether it's the Chinese threat, whether it's the Russian threat, Iranian threat, North Korean threat, whatever...the Global War on Terror, issues in Africa or Latin America, we're going to...America is going to prevail with our allies and partners.

It's going to take a lot of hard work, and as you mentioned, we're going to inherit a mess that was bigger than the one we inherited on January 2017. But when we get the keys back to the car, America is going to come

roaring back economically, diplomatically, militarily. And it's going to be a lot of fun to watch.

Morgan: Well, thank you to Ambassador O'Brien, to Secretary Mike Pompeo, and of course, all of my former colleagues and fellow panelists now at the Nixon Seminar. If you enjoyed this, you could watch us again on Tuesday, June 6th live here in this link. You'll see most of our shining faces ready to talk about the new threats of the day.

Thank you so much for joining us. Thank you from the Nixon Library. Thanks. Good night.

Robert: Thank you.