Transcript:

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| **Title Slide**  
0:00-0:00 | The Institute for Freedom and Community  
Michael Lind:  
Immigration and the New Class War  
March 19, 2019—7:00 p.m.  
Viking Theater |
| **Thanks from the Guest:**  
0:00-0:46 | *Michael Lind:* Thanks, and I’d like to thank Professor Santurri and the Institute for Freedom and Community. I do regret the introduction because you’re supposed to lower expectations so I don’t disappoint people. But you may have built them up a little bit. But I hope you want—it’s great to be back. Northfield, Minnesota, yay. What a very wonderful, engaging audience. And I say this as the veteran of many, many audiences in many places, so that’s always a pleasure when you have students and community members and other academics like the ones here. |
| **Question 1:** What do you mean, precisely, by class war?  
0:46-1:50 | *Edmund Santurri:* Yes. So let’s start. Michael, in summer 2017, you published an article in the journal *American Affairs*, an article entitled “The New Class War.” Among other things, you proposed in that essay that American immigration policy should be assessed against the background of this new class war. Now this new class war wasn’t the class war that Marx talked about, that is to say a war between the owners of the means of production, the capitalists, and the working class. This was a class war, you said, which was a war between a new class, a managerial class, a transnational managerial class, and the working class. What do you mean, precisely, by class war? This new class war and what are the implications for the immigration question? |
| **Answer to Question 1:** The class war is between the managerial class and the working class. The top 10 | *Lind:* Class analysis is rare in ordinary politics because all factions, left, right, and center, want to claim there’s no class division. There’s good people and bad people. Or there’s the public interest and the correct conception and the mistaken conceptions. I find it indispensable in understanding American society and societies anywhere in the world. I should say that class analysis, as Marx himself wrote, he said, it was not original with me, said Marx. This goes back to Aristotle and Plato and...
to 15 percent making up the top class, and the rest making up the bottom part, who live check to check.  
1:50-11:22

| theories of different classes. The body of thinking that I’m building on in this *American Affairs* essay and also in a book based on it called *The New Class War*, which will be published by Penguin in the fall, goes back to the middle of the 20th century when James Burnham, who had been the number two deputy of Trotsky in the United States, the dissident Soviet Communist, broke with the Communists and the Trotskyites and wrote a book called *The Managerial Revolution* in 1942 when he said Marx was right about industrialization creating this new class structure.  

He was wrong about where history is going. He said, and he was still, is a very Marxist analysis still, he said in premodern agrarian society, the two big classes were the landlords and the peasants. Or the farm workers. They could be slaves, they could be serfs, they could be free peasants. Industrialism converted most of the peasants into wage earners. The proletarians. Proletariat comes from a Latin word that means somebody without property. You would die if you were not paid wages. You’re totally dependent on a labor market. Having a majority of wage workers, you only get that in industrial societies in the 19th and 20th centuries. Then the capitalists, who had been merchants or smiths, in some cases they were artisans. Very low status in medieval society, they become the richest people in first Britain and then in the United States, Germany, and France. So Marx predicted that the bourgeois, the classic capitalist who was the owner/operator of a business and is running it, think of Ebenezer Scrooge, right? You’re running the business and Bob Cratchit is working for you. Eventually, the proletariat, Bob Cratchit, is going to replace Ebenezer Scrooge, peacefully or violently. Then the workers will run everything themselves.

That had not worked out in the time since the publication of *The Communist Manifesto* in 1848. Now it’s almost a century later and Burnham said, no, what we see happening, and he drew on Gardiner and Means, two American scholars. Their work on the rise of the manager. You got these enormous corporations like US Steel, the first billion dollar company. Andrew Carnegie technically was the capitalist owner, but he couldn’t monitor what all of these hundreds or thousands of workers were doing. So he created this new class of managers, who, you created business schools. You created the MBA. You had lawyers. You had marketers. You had all of these managers and professionals running these gigantic corporations in Europe and the US, and Burnham said in the 1940s that their equivalence in other industrial countries are the bureaucrats in the Soviet Union. Technically, the working class ran the Soviet Union. He said, no, no. There’s a new ruling class. It consists of...
the managers and they’re members of the Communist Party. It’s what was later called the nomenclature. It’s about a few percent of the population, but they’re the same as the bosses in the United States. He argued that in the so-called capitalist societies, the passive investors depended on the managers, on the CEOs, who did not own the corporations. They might own some stock, but they were essentially employees of General Electric or US Steel or whatever. And in practice, they were the ones making the decisions. Not the stock owners, necessarily.

So he predicted, rather pessimistically, look. He said that in different forms in the US, in Europe, in the fascist countries, in the communist countries, you’re going to get this managerial class to come to power. Then the trick is to restrain it and that’s the challenge of democracy and all ruling classes. That is, how does the majority, whether they’re peasants in the old days or workers, wage earners, in the present, how do they check the power of this elite that is really running things? Interestingly enough, John Kenneth Galbraith, a great liberal economist, was influenced by Burnham and that shaped his idea of what he called the “techno structure” in his book *The New Industrial State* in the 1960s, where he made a similar argument.

It’s not entirely original with me. I use the term in my first book, *The Next American Nation*, overclass. There was a *Newsweek* cover story, which kind of got it wrong. Because what I mean by overclass is simply managerial professional class. It’s people with college degrees, but particularly with advanced degrees, who are about 10, 15 percent of the population. I belong to it. Many of you in the room, if not most of you, if you have a college educated, college students, and so on. It’s us, right? It’s not this 0.001 percent of billionaires out there. Arguably, we run the country in the sense that things that go against our interests as college-educated professionals get nowhere politically.

I’ll give you two examples of that. In 2016, Hilary Clinton, and I think some of the other Democratic candidates, said we need to raise taxes on the rich. But we need to cut taxes on the middle class. If memory serves, Hilary defined the middle class as $200,000 a year or below. I’m sorry, if your household is $200,000, you’re way up there. You’re like 97th, 98th percentile. But this professional class is so powerful, you would see letters now and then to the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* saying, I’m a dentist. I make $400,000 a year and my wife is a lawyer. We pull down $800 grand. We can hardly pay our bills. We’re middle class. Who are these people calling us rich? How can you live in New York City on less than $1 million a year?
So one of my purposes in the article as well as in the book is to kind of shock people into thinking, it’s not the 1 percent or even the 0.01 percent, it’s the top 10 or 15 percent. My interpretation of the populism that we’re seeing on both sides of the Atlantic, in the United States that produced Trump and that produced Brexit in Britain and the Yellow Jacket protests in France, has clearly got class dimensions to it. That is, on one side, you tend to have the college-educated professionals who cluster in Europe and America in a fairly small number of big cities. Hubs, I call them in the book.

And then you’ve got the working classes of all races, and particularly in the United States, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans, as of the first decade of the 21st century are majority suburban now. So the whole idea of urban minority, that was true in the ‘60s and ‘70s. It’s not true now. So you’re seeing this geographic division and you see this when you look at electoral maps if you do it at the county level. So the red and the blue in the United States, the red being Republicans, the blue being Democrats, the blue are big cities and college towns. The red is kind of everywhere else.

It’s not really the countryside because most of the people who vote red live in the outer suburbs of these big metro areas. So geographically, this is the expression of the class division between the college-educated professionals who tend to live in the cities and the working class of all races. Now there are divisions within the working class on race, on religion, ethnicity, and so on, we could talk about. But they’re priced out. They don’t live in Central Paris. They don’t live in Downtown London. They don’t live in Midtown Manhattan. So you get these maps or a geographic expression of this class divide.

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<th>Question 2: What is the connection between this class division and immigration policy?</th>
<th>Santurri: All right, so now with this class divide, you say that the contemporary, current problem of immigration, or the debate about immigration policy has to be seen to some degree in the light of this class division. What is the connection exactly?</th>
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<td>Answer to Question 2: It has to do with the distributional effects and the costs and benefits. Again, in ordinary politics, if you talk like me, you should not run for office. If you’re going to be a politician or an activist, you have to say there’s only the public interest and then what is good for the whole, the nation state, for America or the world, whatever it is. Then people who disagree are evil or stupid. They simply don’t understand what’s good or they’re just personally malevolent. I’m approaching this</td>
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immigration system is the opposite of other Western countries, in that we take 2/3 family unification and 1/3 skilled workers, where the others take 1/3 family unification and 2/3 skilled workers. They also treat their skilled worker immigrants better.

11:37-21:27

as an analyst having spent most of my life in public policy in Washington, DC. Every policy has winners and losers. There are distributional effects. Generally the people pushing for the policies are the winners. Now maybe there are cases of mass delusion where people push for policies that are harmful for them. Usually that gets corrected in time. The people who oppose them, maybe it’s a delusion that they just think they’re losing and they’ve been deceived. But in some cases, at the very least, they’re not gaining from it.

So when it comes to immigration, there are clear class distributional effects. There have been two kinds of gold-standard reports that almost everybody respects from the National Academy of Sciences. It’s a bipartisan academic. One was in 1996; one was in 2016. They both had pretty much the same conclusion. So immigration, and we’re just looking at unskilled immigration right here. We can have a separate conversation about college-educated immigrants. But this is unskilled or low-wage immigration. It generally comes to a couple of conclusions. It increases GDP, gross domestic product, which is just a mathematical certainty. Because GDP is calculated by the workforce times productivity. If you expand the workforce, GDP goes up, so by definition, all immigration increases GDP.

There are different distributional effects. The distributional effects of immigration according to the National Academy of Sciences, they hurt both natives and previous immigrants with the lowest levels of education. That is high school dropouts and high school graduates. Because they are competing with unskilled immigrants for jobs. So it tends to lower their wages. In the first generation, they argue that this changes after the second and third generation. Unskilled immigrants remove more from the welfare state than they pay in taxes, putting into it. So that’s the costs.

Then the question was, what are the benefits? There you have to break it down country by country. So it’s different in Britain than it is in the United States. It’s different in Canada than it is. So in the United States, we have this very polarized immigration system where most countries in the, most Western democracies have a system in which about two-thirds of immigrants are skilled immigrants. They have what is called a point system. You get a point if, for example, Canada, Australia, Britain. They give you points if you speak English. If you have a college diploma, you get points, and so on. So it’s about two-thirds based on skills and education. About a third is based on other factors of which the two most important are family unification, that is you’re related to
somebody already in the country and you reunite the families, or humanitarian, asylees and refugees.

The United States, for historical reasons we can get into, has the reverse of that. Going back to the 1965 Immigration and Naturalization Act. We’re about two-thirds family unification and about one-third other categories. Of the educated workers we have, the majority of them are squeezed in through a non-immigrant visa program, the H-1B program, which you may have heard about, and through universities. So it’s very important for universities, students who come from foreign countries as university students and then get a sponsor who’s an employer for an H-1B. It’s a very exploitative system in as much as it’s indentured servitude, strictly speaking. You’re bound to that employer. You cannot quit without going back to your home country.

So it’s quite different from a point system of the kind that you have in Canada, where if you meet the points, you get a Green Card. You become what in the US is called a legal permanent resident. If your boss mistreats you, you can quit and then get another job in Canada. That’s not the system here that we have for a lot of these highly educated H-1Bs. So we have a very polarized immigration system where, because of family reunification, it benefited chiefly citizens of Latin American descent, from Mexico and Central America, who were largely rural in the same way most European immigrants were 100 years ago. Nothing new there. And with large families. So you had this rapid expansion of this largely rural, unskilled population through family reunification. Then at the top, much smaller, it’s less than 100,000 a year, you have these highly skilled contract workers. And then there’s a diversity quota and there are refugees and asylees and so on.

So what you find looking at the poles in both the US and Europe, and this is pretty much true in all industrial democracies, there is no popular backlash against skilled immigrants. It tends to be against the less skilled immigrants where the opponents of that category, whether they’re right or wrong, we can debate, they say they’re dependent on welfare and they drive down wages at the bottom. It can take on nasty, ethnic, nativist overtones in some countries, but it’s not necessarily racist. So for example, in Britain, there was a backlash against so-called Polish plumbers. Because under the EU’s free mobility rules, a lot of Eastern Europeans were coming and competing with low-wage Brits in the lower working class labor market. They just became known proverbially as the Polish plumber.

So it’s a mess. It’s a mess. You have concerns about economic competition. You get concerns about rapid cultural change, which have
always tended to lead to backlashes. There was a huge backlash against German Americans led by, among others, Benjamin Franklin, back in the 18th century. He thought too many Germans were moving to Philadelphia and he said they will never assimilate. They’re horrible people, and we should keep them out. So you get these waves of nativist backlash, but the thing is, you can’t simply dismiss the backlash against immigration. Yeah, sometimes it’s just pure racism and nativism. You just don’t like those people.

But there are differences in the costs and the benefits. If we have a growing amount of jobs, which the economist David Autor calls “wealth work.” It’s mostly big-city jobs doing menial services for rich people. It’s like dog walkers and spa workers and these kinds of categories. So you’re getting this kind of polarized class system in cities like New York and San Francisco, Los Angeles, even in Austin, where I live, which has now become a big metropolis. Where the working classes of all races get forced out by the high rents. You get this very high-end, professional, managerial elite, and then you get people who are directly or indirectly servants, basically, or service providers, who tend to be very poorly paid. No benefits. No unions. That sort of thing.

So I think you just can’t understand what’s going on without seeing this kind of three-way system where you have these two classes within the big cities. London, Paris, New York, Austin, Minneapolis, maybe. Which is the high-end professionals, the managers, the managerial class, and people who are kind of doing Downton Abbey work for them in many cases. If you recognize the reference. Then out in the outer suburbs and the small towns, you get not only the older, rural people, but you also get people who used to live in the cities but were driven out. So white working class. It’s also African American working class, Latino working class, and others. And aspirational immigrants who see working in New York or LA as a temporary waystation before they move out to the suburbs and their dollar goes farther and maybe they get paid a little more. I had an editor at the *New York Times* who kept complaining that her maids kept quitting and moving to Long Island. I thought, good for them.

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<th>Question 3: How do you propose the American system needs to be adjusted? 21:27-21:38</th>
<th>Santurri: So you think that the American system needs to be adjusted in light of this analysis? What sorts of proposals do you make?</th>
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*Dialogue That Opens Minds*
Answer to Question 3: I don’t make any detailed proposals because we’re further from having any kind of comprehensive legislation on immigration reform than we were 10 or 15 years ago.

Santurri: But you have proposed things like we need to move in the direction of skills and that sort of criteria.

Lind: Here, I’m just following the Democratic party tradition. President Carter and President Clinton both appointed immigration reform commissions. One was headed by Father Theodore Hesburgh, who was the head of Notre Dame. And that report came out in 1981. Then Barbara Jordan, the first African American representative since Reconstruction from Texas, whom I knew slightly. My aunt helped her with her memoir and she performed the wedding ceremony for my cousin. So she was the Jordan Commission appointed by President Bill Clinton came out with a report. It seemed reasonable at the time. They said, by all means, we want to keep family unification. Bring over your parents, bring over your children. But we have all these categories of siblings and cousins and these gradations, and that just leads to this kind of, it’s called chain migration, which some people think is insulting, but that was the original—originally, it was an academic term. So kind of limit to immediate, nuclear family. You emphasize skilled immigrants, because of the thought that we’re not creating a lot of well-paid jobs for unskilled people in an advanced industrial society. And you have employer enforcement, because if employers have to obey the law and hire citizens and legal permanent residents that as green card workers, then the illegal immigration problem kind of dries up because there’s no demand. And you don’t need to fortify the border and build walls and do all this.

So this was the perspective of the labor wing of the Democratic party in the 1980s and the 1990s. Well, as you all know, things have changed. In the days of Abolish ICE and the parties have flipped on immigration. So Senator Tom Cotton, conservative Republican from Arkansas, has a bill, I think it’s called the RAISE Act. They all have to have these clever acronym names. I don’t even know what the acronym means. It’s essentially the Clinton Jordan Commission recommendations. It’s been universally denounced as xenophobic and nativistic and fascist and racist by Democrats now. You had a glimpse of the older Democratic party line when Ezra Klein, the editor of Vox, interviewed Bernie Sanders in 2016. So Ezra said, “What do you think of the idea of just having open borders?” And there’s a YouTube video you can look up if you’re interested. Bernie Sanders says, “That’s a terrible idea. That’s a
right-wing idea. That’s the Koch brothers. That will drive down wages.” And he says, we want to help raise wages in the rest of the world through development, but not by driving down wages in the US. So for you younger people, the liberal position for most of the 20th century was moderate restriction of immigration for labor reasons. Trade-tight labor markets. All the way up until the 2000s, it was right wing Republicans and Libertarians who were against immigration enforcement, against workplace enforcement, because they wanted—Milton Friedman, the greatest influence on conservative economic thinking, wanted open borders. And I promise I’ll only do this once, but the quote, I can’t memorize these things.

Santurri: I know the feeling.

Lind: I have a quote from Milton Friedman, who if you’re not familiar with him, a very influential Libertarian economist and much of what the free-market conservatives do to this day in terms of policy goes back to his book *Capitalism and Freedom*, published in 1962. So this is Professor Friedman: “If you have a welfare state, if you have a state in which every resident is promised a certain minimal level of income or a minimum level of subsistence, regardless of whether he works or not, produces it or not, then free immigration is really an impossible thing.”

So Friedman’s solution was to have open borders but get rid of the welfare state. Just abolish Social Security, the minimum wage, and everything else, right? Paul Krugman, who’s, I think it’s safe to say, is a liberal economist, is kind of the opposite of Milton Friedman. He agrees in an op ed he wrote a few years back, he said, because modern America is a welfare state and “low-skilled immigrants don’t pay enough taxes to cover the cost of the benefits they receive.” Krugman concluded that “the political threat that low-skill immigration poses to the welfare state is more serious than to its other consequences.” So here you have both Milton Friedman and Paul Krugman agreeing that if you have a welfare state, you’re going to restrict immigration somehow. Because otherwise the voters will rebel.

And if you look at the most generous Scandinavian welfare states, like the Swedish welfare state, historically, they had very long residency requirements. You had to live in Sweden for decades before you qualified and you had to have paid in through payroll taxes. That’s because the classic 20th century welfare state, maybe it will be different in the 21st century or the 22nd, it’s essentially a deal by which the working class majority right now is paying other members of the working class majority who are retired or disabled or unemployed. That assumes that this is kind of a closed club. You can admit members on
whatever plane you want, but it’s not anybody who joins the club instantly gets the benefits. There has to have been some kind of record. And a lot of Western countries have treaties like Social Security tax treaties. Do you know about this? So they will count years spent in France by an American expatriate towards payments into Social Security when the American comes back to the US who’s been a citizen the whole time and retires. This is something I think particularly progressives nowadays, they tend to dismiss the fairness criticism of participation and eligibility for welfare state benefits. But it really is fundamental to the deal, not just in countries with stingy, miserly welfare states like the United States, but ones with very generous welfare states in Northern Europe. In fact, the Danes have the most draconian immigration laws now, as well as one of the most generous welfare states. They’ve been requiring potential refugees to turn over any money they have, any jewelry, anything, while they’re on probation to see if they qualify under laws of asylum, which seems kind of harsh to me. But that’s an element of this debate. How does immigration interact with a welfare state?

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<th>Question 4: Your position sounds like Trump’s position. Is it?</th>
<th>Santurri: Your position, abstracting for the moment from the issue of racism, let’s just put that aside for a second, it sounds to me like Trump’s position. Is that fair or an unfair characterization?</th>
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| **Answer to Question 4: No. I believe in actually stopping illegal immigration by having all employers required to use E-Verify. And having the government take responsibility to do something about stolen identities.** | Lind: I think Trump, he has made racist remarks, talking about shithole countries, if I can quote our president, and Africa versus Norway. I mean, that’s racist. Now, the press, and I worked for *The New Yorker*, the *New Republic*, the *Harper’s Magazine*, but the press is 99.9 percent liberal Democratic. I’m just telling you based on experience. There are no Republicans in the offices of *The New Yorker* or CNN or anything like that. Maybe in the business side. So there is a narrative where everything Trump says is fitted into the narrative that he’s a deranged neo-Nazi, which I think is going too far. But no, my position, I think, is the Barbara Jordan position.  
Santurri: But extracting, again extracting from the racism dimension, practically, what is the difference between your position and what Trump—what is it?  
Lind: Oh, there’s a huge difference between my position and Trump’s, and that is the wall is a kabuki theater, right? As we say in Washington. It’s like this very elaborate Japanese drama where all this stuff is going on and not very much happens. If you’ve ever watched kabuki theater. I don’t want to insult Japanese culture, but that’s the political phrase. As I
said, if the Republicans were serious about reducing illegal immigration, they would have universal E-Verify, and this is something that was proposed by the Jordan Commission and in a version by Hesburgh. You just fine or imprison employers who knowingly hire illegal immigrants. And the E-Verify works to make sure that the social security numbers, and there’s another number called an ITIN number for non-citizens, that this has not been stolen. There are two or three million Americans whose social security numbers have been stolen and are being used by illegal immigrants in the workforce now. I am one. I was surprised last spring. I got a letter from the IRS. It says, “Your social security number has been stolen. It is being used by someone in the workplace in the United States. We cannot tell you who it is or where it is. It is your responsibility to contact the credit rating agencies to make sure your credit is not ruined.” So I thought, okay, thank you, my government. So I contacted Experian and I said, can you monitor this. They said, “No, you have to check back every 90 days to make sure your credit is not ruined by Michael Lind who is working at this very moment somewhere in the United States.” The odds are, I have no resentment towards this individual. It’s probably an undocumented immigrant who’s working in some terrible job for a suburban construction contractor or in a kitchen or something like—these are exploited labors, right? I want them to have a path to citizenship, become citizens, and have rights. And vote.

But the thing is, the media is not telling you the truth about this stuff. So when you have the phrase undocumented, you can’t get a job in much of the United States if you don’t have documents. They have fake documents or they have stolen documents. So how did this other Michael Lind, who is working probably for terrible wages in horrible conditions, get my social security number and my name and address and all of this? Well, these individuals are not adept at computer hacking. Only international criminal gangs and certain foreign governments are capable of hacking the Social Security Administration’s agencies. We know a couple of foreign states that have done this. So how does it get to the employer? Well, I happened to be told this by some illegal immigrants whom I knew working in Washington, DC. There are places you can go where sometimes the employer gets it directly. Sometimes the individuals, the workers, get it. So the boss will say, okay, look. Go to this lawyer or go to this store, pay a certain, a couple hundred dollars, and they give you an ITIN, they give you a social security number. Like mine. Well, they got it from the Mafia. They got it from transnational criminal gangs, which may have gotten it from state-supported foreign hacking.
One of the reasons I think there is this backlash that fuels Trumpism was essentially, ever since the Reagan years, the federal government under both parties took a blasé attitude towards this. So it’s true of George Herbert Walker Bush, Bill Clinton, George W. Bush, Barack Obama. Yeah, three million Americans had their social security numbers stolen. Maybe we’ll notify them. I was surprised to be notified. They haven’t done that until recently. But then they say, the Social Security Administration cannot tell the IRS and so on, so there’s no communication. So right now, there’s a court case and one case, I think it’s Kansas or somewhere else, can individuals sue the government for not enforcing the law if their identity has been stolen? So that’s why I do think there’s a class element in this. That is, the elite Democrats and the elite Republicans think, oh, yeah, big deal. This is fine. We’ll just live with this.

**Question 5: But you do believe we need to focus on immigrants who can contribute more, right?**

**36:08-36:39**

**Santurri:** But you do say that in the competition among the great powers internationally, the United States has to be concerned about productive capacity and that competition and developing innovation and productive capacity and that sort of thing, and you tie that, in certain moments, to a proposal on immigration, which is that we ought to be focused on those who can contribute to that productive capacity and we need to move in a direction other than the one that we have currently embraced. Isn’t that fair?

**Answer to Question 5: We’re in the early stages of Cold War II. Not based on nuclear weapons but based on economics and industrialization. In terms of immigration, we thought we were so ahead of the rest of the world that we didn’t need to worry about it. We need to rethink that.**

**36:39-39:17**

**Lind:** Yes. I think that we’re in the early stages of Cold War II. Where the major adversary is China. Russia is right now on the Chinese side, but could flip. But this is a long-term geopolitical and economic competition with China and it’s not like the competition with the Soviet Union in Cold War I. The Chinese are not spreading Marxist/ Leninist/ Maoist/ Xi Jinping thought. It’s not an ideological competition. It’s more like 19th century Europe versus France. It's a great power competition. We’re competing for markets, competing to dominate 5G, competing to dominate AI. It’s largely economic. It’s also diplomatic. There’s a military element to it. And the strength of your manufacturing base and your scientific and technological base is critical to this. And we can’t take it for granted the way we could in Cold War I, because in Cold War I, the Soviet Union was essentially a third-world country that was mostly frozen with nuclear weapons. They had some very good native engineers, but a lot of the stuff they did, as we did, we got them from German rocket scientists after World War II. And thank god we got the good German rocket scientists like Wernher von Braun. And they got the second-tier ones.
China has surpassed us in manufacturing capability already. It has surpassed us in GDP according to one measure, purchasing power parity. According to the other measure, market exchange rates, it will pass us by 2030. The United States, the whole time since the Civil War, we’ve been a great power. We’ve never been number two economically and industrially. We still have a lead over China in many areas, but I think this is going to concentrate our minds. So I can tell you it’s leading to a rethinking in Washington among both progressives and conservatives of this kind of complacent attitude we had after the end of the Cold War that we’re number one. We’re the unipolar superpower. We’ll police the world forever. If people want to take manufacturing from us, fine. We have finance, we have Hollywood.

In terms of immigration, there wasn’t this sense that we are competing for talent with the rest of the world, because we just thought we are so far ahead technologically that it will take ages for them to catch up. So I think we need to rethink this.

Follow Up to Question 5: Isn’t that Trump’s position?

39:17-39:36

Santurri: Isn’t that—that is Trump’s position that we need to be focused on that with respect to immigration. That is to say, bringing in people who can contribute to productive capacity and are less concerned about the other kinds or rationales for admitting persons to the United States.

Answer to Follow Up Question 5: My difference from the president has to do with the wall as a showman’s stunt instead of actually requiring universal E-Verify which the employers would get upset about.

39:36-42:39

Lind: That’s his position. It was also the position of Marco Rubio and Senator Schumer in 2013-2014 comprehensive immigration reform. There have been two attempts, both failures for political reasons, at comprehensive immigration reform in this century. The first was in 2006-2007 and the second was in 2013-2014. They were both fairly sensible from my perspective. They kind of followed the Hesburgh and the Jordan Commission approaches. You would keep family unification but you would trim the cousins somewhat. More nuclear family. You would greatly expand the skill—have a point system so that if you come here from Asia or Africa or the Middle East or Latin America and go to the university, then you could get a green card without having to be bound to Infosys or Apple or whatever, as an H-1B. There would be employer enforcement, E-Verify. And you would have a path to citizenship, right? For most of the people who are already here who are unauthorized. So it’s a fairly sensible bipartisan approach.

President Trump with his proposal on DACA, on deferred action for the children who came here when they were very young, that is essentially an amnesty in citizenship. Because what it would do is, if you granted amnesty for these people who came when they were very young but had been born abroad, because they can then bring in their relatives, they
can retroactively get citizenship for their parents who brought them here. So it’s actually a de-facto amnesty and he seems quite sincere in his desire to do this for the wall. My problem with the wall is, I think this is a symbolic stunt. And he’s a great showman. And I think that he promised this wall and he will run in 2020 saying, I promised to defeat ISIS. I promised to do this. I promised to do that. And here’s a picture of the wall. Right in Arizona or Texas or whatever. As I say, I don’t think that’s—if you have employer enforcement.

So the wall unites the Republican party because it does not threaten the employers. If the president came out and said we need universal, mandatory E-Verify for all businesses tomorrow, lots of landscapers, real estate developers, sweatshops, in the ag industry, they’re going to fight back because their model is based on unauthorized, non-unionized, non-citizen labor. That’s where I will continue to insist on distinguishing my view from the president’s.