

PROMISE #3: DEFEND OUR NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY, BORDERS, AND BOUNTY AGAINST GLOBAL THREATS.

The United States belongs to “We the people.” All government authority derives from the consent of the people, and our nation’s success derives from the character of its people. The American people’s right to rule ourselves is the obverse of our duty: We cannot outsource to others our obligation to ensure the conditions that allow our families, local communities, churches and synagogues, and neighborhoods to thrive. The buck stops with each of us, so each of us must have the freedom to pursue the good for ourselves and those entrusted to our care.

To most Americans, this is common sense. But in Washington, D.C. and other centers of Leftist power like the media and the academy, this statement of basic civics is branded hate speech. Progressive elites speak in lofty terms of *openness, progress, expertise, cooperation, and globalization*. But too often, these terms are just rhetorical Trojan horses concealing their true intention—stripping “we the people” of our constitutional authority over our country’s future.

America’s corporate and political elites do not believe in the ideals to which our nation is dedicated—self-governance, the rule of law, and ordered liberty. They certainly do not trust the American people, and they disdain the Constitution’s restrictions on their ambitions.

Instead, they believe in a kind of 21st century Wilsonian order in which the “enlightened,” highly educated managerial elite runs things rather than the humble, patriotic working families who make up the majority of what the elites contemptuously call “fly-over country.”

This Wilsonian hubris has spread like a cancer through many of America’s largest corporations, its public institutions, and its popular culture. Those who run our so-called American corporations have bent to the will of the woke agenda and care more for their foreign investors and organizations than their American workers and customers. Today, nearly every top-tier U.S. university president or Wall Street hedge fund manager has more in common with a socialist, European head of state than with the parents at a high school football game in Waco, Texas. Many elites’ entire identity, it seems, is wrapped up in their sense of superiority over *those people*. But under our Constitution, they are the *mere equals* of the workers who shower *after* work instead of before.

This is as it should and must be. Intellectual sophistication, advanced degrees, financial success, and all other markers of elite status have no bearing on a person’s knowledge of the one thing most necessary for governance: what it means to live well. That knowledge is available to each of us, no matter how humble our backgrounds or how unpretentious our attainments. It is open to us to read in the book of human nature, to which we are all offered the key just by merit of our shared humanity. One of the great premises of American political life is that everyone who can read in that book must have a voice in deciding the course and fate of our Republic.

Progressive policymakers and pundits in America either fail to understand this premise or intentionally reject it. They enthusiastically support supranational organizations like the United Nations and European Union, which are run and staffed almost entirely by people who share their values and are mostly insulated from the influence of national elections. That’s why they are eager for America to sign international treaties on everything from pharmaceutical patents to climate change to “the rights of the child”—and why those treaties invariably endorse policies that could *never* pass through the U.S. Congress. Like the progressive Woodrow Wilson a century ago, the woke Left today seeks a world, bound by global treaties *they write*, in which *they* exercise dictatorial powers over all nations without being subject to democratic accountability.

That’s why today’s progressive Left so cavalierly supports open borders despite the lawless humanitarian crisis their policy created along America’s southern border. They seek to purge the very concept of the nation-state from the American ethos, no matter how much crime increases or resources drop for schools and hospitals or wages decrease for the working class. Open-borders activism is a

classic example of what the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer called “cheap grace”—publicly promoting one’s own virtue without risking any personal inconvenience. Indeed, the only direct impact of open borders on pro-open borders elites is that the constant flow of illegal immigration suppresses the wages of their housekeepers, landscapers, and busboys.

“Cheap grace” aptly describes the Left’s love affair with environmental extremism. Those who suffer most from the policies environmentalism would have us enact are the aged, poor, and vulnerable. It is not a political cause, but a pseudo-religion meant to baptize liberals’ ruthless pursuit of absolute power in the holy water of environmental virtue.

At its very heart, environmental extremism is decidedly anti-human. Stewardship and conservation are supplanted by population control and economic regression. Environmental ideologues would ban the fuels that run almost all of the world’s cars, planes, factories, farms, and electricity grids. Abandoning confidence in human resilience and creativity in responding to the challenges of the future would raise impediments to the most meaningful human activities. They would stand human affairs on their head, regarding human activity itself as fundamentally a threat to be sacrificed to the god of nature.

The same goals are the heart of elite support for economic globalization. For 30 years, America’s political, economic, and cultural leaders embraced and enriched Communist China and its genocidal Communist Party while hollowing out America’s industrial base. What may have started out with good intentions has now been made clear. Unfettered trade with China has been a catastrophe. It has made a handful of American corporations enormously profitable while twisting their business incentives *away* from the American people’s needs. For a generation, politicians of both parties promised that engagement with Beijing would grow our economy while injecting American values into China. The opposite has happened. American factories have closed. Jobs have been outsourced. Our manufacturing economy has been financialized. And all along, the corporations profiting failed to export our values of human rights and freedom; rather, they imported China’s anti-American values into their C-suites.

Even before the rise of Big Tech, Wall Street ignored China’s serial theft of American intellectual property. It outright cheered the elimination of American manufacturing jobs. (“Learn to code!” they would gloat.) These were just the price of progress. Engagement was at every step *Beijing’s* project, not America’s. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) dictated terms, only to break them whenever it suited them. They stole our technology, spied on our people, and threatened our allies, all with trillions of dollars of wealth and military power financed by their access to *our* market.

Then came the rise of Big Tech, which is now less a *contributor* to the U.S. economy than it is a tool of China’s government. In exchange for cheap labor and regulatory special treatment from Beijing, America’s largest technology firms funnel data about Americans to the CCP. They hand over sensitive intellectual property with military and intelligence applications to keep the money rolling in. They let Beijing censor Chinese users on their platforms. They let the CCP set their corporate policies about mobile apps. And they run interference for our rival’s political priorities in Washington. One side of Big-Tech companies’ business model is old-fashioned American competitiveness and world-changing technological innovation; but increasingly, that side of these businesses is overshadowed by their role as operatives in the lucrative employ of America’s most dangerous international enemy.

If you want to understand the danger posed by collaboration between Big Tech and the CCP, look no further than TikTok. The highly addictive video app, used by 80 million Americans every month and overwhelmingly popular among teenage girls, is in effect a tool of Chinese espionage. The ties between TikTok and the Chinese government are not loose, and they are not coincidental.

The same can be observed of many U.S. colleges and universities. Through the CCP’s Confucius Institutes, Beijing has been just as successful at compromising and coopting our higher education system as they have at compromising and coopting corporate America.

A casual reader might take the last few pages as surveying a broad array of challenges facing the American people and the next conservative President: supranational policymaking, border security, globalization, engagement with China, manufacturing, Big Tech, and Beijing-compromised colleges.

But these really are not many issues, but two: (1) that China is a totalitarian enemy of the United States, not a strategic partner or fair competitor, and (2) that America's elites have betrayed the American people. The solution to *all of the above* problems is not to tinker with this or that government program, to replace this or that bureaucrat. These are problems not of technocratic efficiency but of national sovereignty and constitutional governance. We solve them not by trimming and reshaping the leaves but by ripping out the trees—root and branch.

International organizations and agreements that erode our Constitution, rule of law, or popular sovereignty should not be reformed: They should be abandoned. Illegal immigration should be ended, not mitigated; the border sealed, not reprioritized. Economic engagement with China should be ended, not rethought. Our manufacturing and industrial base should be restored, not allowed to deteriorate further. Confucius Institutes, TikTok, and any other arm of Chinese propaganda and espionage should be outlawed, not merely monitored. Universities taking money from the CCP should lose their accreditation, charters, and eligibility for federal funds.

The next conservative President should go beyond merely defending America's energy interests but go on offense, asserting them around the world. America's vast reserves of oil and natural gas are not an environmental problem; they are the lifeblood of economic growth. American dominance of the global energy market would be a good thing: for the world, and, more importantly, for "*we the people*." It's not just about jobs, even though unleashing domestic energy production would create millions of them. It's not just about higher wages for workers who didn't go to college, though they would receive the raises they have missed out on for two generations. Full-spectrum strategic energy dominance would facilitate the reinvigoration of America's entire industrial and manufacturing sector as we disentangle our economy from China. Globally, it would rebalance power away from dangerous regimes in Russia and the Middle East. It would build powerful alliances with fast-growing nations in Africa and provide us the leverage to counter Chinese ambitions in South America and the Pacific. Locally, it would drive billions of dollars of private investment to the communities that have been hammered by globalization since the 1990s. And it would clarify our intentions to Beijing that the next President can ensure that a large part of America's reindustrialization is in the production of the equipment we will need to dissuade future foreign meddling with U.S. vital interests.