The Realignment Podcast Transcript
Ep. 6: Mike Doran

Featuring:

- Saagar Enjeti, *Media Fellow*, Hudson Institute
- Marshall Kosloff, *Media Fellow*, Hudson Institute
- Michael Doran, *Senior Fellow*, Hudson Institute

*This transcript is based off a recording and mistranslations may appear in text. The podcast is available here: https://www.hudson.org/research/15295-the-realignment-ep-6-michael-doran-on-the-failures-of-the-foreign-policy-elite*
KOSLOFF: Michael Doran, welcome to THE REALIGNMENT.

MICHAEL DORAN: Great to be here, thank you.

ENJETI: Mike, the reason we wanted to have you on was there’s a lot of interesting discussions here that we focus on - the changing discussion around policy areas, like economics and trade. But a lot of these are more in the domestic sphere. There hasn't been as much of a grappling with how foreign policy is changing in a realignment world. And so you have been - you've worked in the academic space, you've worked in the DOD, now you work here at the Hudson Institute. How have you seen the conservative foreign policy consensus change over time since you began in the - in your work?

DORAN: Well, I came to Washington in 2005 to work for the Bush administration, and I came on the coattails of the neocons. I wrote some stuff - I was teaching at Princeton and I wrote some things about the Middle East - that's my area of expertise - and it got the attention of the neoconservatives. And I went to work in the White House for Elliott Abrams. And I think the biggest thing that - when I look at it from my point of view, the biggest thing I see is the undermining of the neocon point of view. I don't know how long that will last.

KOSLOFF: And what is the neocon point of view?

DORAN: Well, the neocon point of view is basically values in foreign policy.

ENJETI: And using force to enforce those values?

DORAN: Right. I would put it as kind of - the neocons are - and I wouldn't have said this until after Trump, by the way, so we should come back to that. But I would describe them now as the kind of conservative arm - the militant arm of Wilsonianism.

KOSLOFF: Referring to Woodrow Wilson...

ENJETI: Yeah.

KOSLOFF: ...Trying to remake the world in America's image after World War I.

DORAN: Exactly, yeah - spreading democracy. And you - and willing - spreading...

ENJETI: And you used to teach at the Wilson School.

DORAN: I didn't, but I was - but I spoke there often, yeah. So yeah - and they're using American power to spread democracy and values. And that was central to the vision of President Bush in the Middle East was the democratization of the Middle East.

ENJETI: And so how - what - when you were in the White House - obviously, 2005 kind of was the height of that neocon era, and then you saw much of the American public fall out of dissatisfaction with that, in a very rapid short period of time. What was that like while you were working within the administration, and what was the grappling like within the foreign policy elite at that time?
DORAN: I'm not sure that the foreign policy elite grappled with it as much as we probably should have. I'll tell you what I got. I came in - just as I came in to the administration, there was a - Hurricane Katrina. And I felt - I hadn't been in the in the White House before that, but I felt something between the president and the public break at Katrina, which was very interesting. I mean, people just stopped listening to a lot of what President Bush was saying. I mean, he couldn't move the needle with a speech anymore after that. That was very apparent to me. And you saw it, you know, in - as the war in Iraq got more and more difficult, you saw one of the things that he did was he put Crocker and Petraeus forward. Like, they - he - they built up - they consciously built up General Petraeus to be the voice of the administration on Iraq.

KOSLOFF: Because they needed one because the president...

DORAN: Because they needed a credible voice because I think the president's voice itself wasn't - was no longer moving the needle.

KOSLOFF: So at the time, did you think that - did you buy into the neoconservative foreign policy consensus?

DORAN: Yes. Yes. Yes, I...

KOSLOFF: So actually then, would you have described yourself as a neoconservative?

DORAN: No, I didn't...

ENJETI: What was your mindset going in to the administration?

DORAN: Well, see, from my point of view, this whole thing has been an education. I had not thought all these things through. I wasn't - I didn't have a clear world view, I would say. I mean, I had inclinations and I knew - I like this, I don't like that, but I hadn't thought it all through in any kind of systematic way. And I didn't - when people would call me a neocon, I used to joke and say, I'm not a neocon, I'm a running dog of the neocons.

(LAUGHTER)

DORAN: So I - and that's how I saw myself. I never totally bought into the democratizing the Middle East thing. What I - but what I noted - I'm - I am a big supporter of Israel, on an emotional and an intellectual level, and I always have been. And in the foreign policy world - it's changing now, but it used to be very clear that the supporters of Israel were the neocons, and the realists - you know, the conservative critics of the neocons were hostile to Israel.

KOSLOFF: People from the George H.W. Bush administration, mostly.

DORAN: Yeah. So Brent Scowcroft and - from the H.W. - and James Baker, the secretary of state. And then in the - you know, in the academic area, Walt and Mearsheimer and people like - Walt, you know - so I have a lot of kind of realist inclinations, but there's - in my view, the realists on the Middle East - the people who are anti-Israel - they're actually ideologues. They are ideologically opposed to Israel. It makes no sense - in terms of their theory of foreign policy, they should be - they should love Israel, but they don't.
KOSLOFF: And why's that?

DORAN: Because realism is about power and it's about - look, Israel helped stabilize the eastern Mediterranean for the United States at very little cost. That's - and Israel is willing to go out and fight for its own interests without the United States having to send its own military. So if you're into, say, like what Stephen Walt claims he's into, which is offshore balancing, then this is a fantastic act.

KOSLOFF: And what's offshore balancing?

DORAN: Well, we're - the United States is sort of the last of - the balancer of last resort, where we try to create a balance of power within these different areas of the world without having to use our own forces.

ENJETI: And what makes this so fundamentally different than an ideological support for Israel?

DORAN: Oh, well - but see, look, they also believe that - I'm talking about the realists...

ENJETI: Yes.

DORAN: ...They also say that the neoconservative emphasis on values is totally misplaced, right? So the - you know, when they see hundreds of thousands of people being slaughtered in Syria, millions of people being uprooted - ho hum, OK? It's not our job to go get it - to go get involved. But suddenly, when it comes to Israel, they have this unbelievable moral rhetoric - or this argument with - their argument used to be that the U.S. association with Israel is driving away all of the Arabs, but now people have seen, over the last decade, especially - it's totally untrue. It's all - it's always been untrue, in my view.

KOSLOFF: But it's been repudiated from on the - like - yeah.

DORAN: You can't watch what's going on right now in the Middle East as the - you know, as the Saudis and the Emiratis get closer to Israel - all the time that the U.S. is - you know, has backed them.

KOSLOFF: So the thing is we've sort of taken this to basically the end of the Bush administration. I've - like you referenced to this whole experience being an education for you, what is the product of that education? How have you changed since then?

DORAN: I became much more wary about the use of force and much more wary about what we can do. I thought - I had an argument with a friend of mine - he'll remain - he's somebody whose name you would know, I'll keep him out of it. But I remember, when the Iraq war began, he came to me and he said, they're really screwing all of this up. And I said, look, they're going to get it right in the end because the stakes are too - are - you know, the stakes are too great. And I don't think we ever got Iraq right. And I no longer believe that things will sort of just right themselves on these - in these matters. I wrote a book on Eisenhower. I thought it was very interesting that, when Eisenhower was sending the troops into Lebanon in 1958 - this is the most successful foreign intervention the United States has ever done. I mean, it was - I think two soldiers died, one in an accident. But he didn't know that that was going to be the case
when he sent them. And in his memoirs, he said that sending the troops into Lebanon was the second most difficult decision he had to make - you know, the first one being D-Day - because everything could go wrong.

KOSLOFF: Yeah.

DORAN: But anyway, I - a - I read an account from an aide who came upon him when he was struggling with the decision. And he was struggling over the justification for the intervention, which I thought was very interesting. Now, this is a guy with enormous experience in military intervention, and he understood that how this thing is defined and shaped - how it's presented to the American public is going to have an enormous - at its conception - is going to have an enormous influence over the whole course of it. So, you know, I think - I don't take these things as lightly as I did - as I might have in the past, when I didn't see how it could all go wrong. I have - I also - you know, I watched the debate and I watched how quickly the support, particularly in the left, for the - for intervention evaporated. I mean, the Democrats have rewritten the history now, but they were there supporting it at the time, but it evaporated...

KOSLOFF: By 2004, it's gone.

DORAN: It's gone. It's gone. And so just - I guess what I - part of my lesson - part of this lesson was not so much about the world but about us and who we are. But also I - this - the election of Donald Trump was a turning point for me because that's when I realized that these ideas that had been dominant in our foreign policy didn't have a lot of legitimacy in the - among the American public, on the right and on the left.

KOSLOFF: So we talked about values defining foreign policies. What are the other ideas that developed legitimacy (ph)?

DORAN: Well, I wouldn't talk about so much in terms of ideas, except that - as just that there has grown a great disconnect between the ideas in the foreign policy elite and the public. The public doesn't see that the American foreign policy - the traditional foreign policies are serving the interests of the middle class. That seems, to me, to be obvious. That was - Donald Trump had an incredibly - Donald Trump had an incredibly consistent message in the campaign in 2016, and that is that your elites are looking after themselves and not after you, and that's true across the board in foreign policy and domestic policy and so forth. And I don't think that there's been a sufficient reckoning among foreign policy experts on the right with this fact because still, in this town, you can feel it. Everybody thinks, after Trump, the man, leaves the scene, we're going back to where we were in 2012.

ENJETI: You said something - you said, we - you learned about who we are. What did you mean by that? Who are we as America and what was that lesson?

DORAN: Well, I mean, that's just sort of my own idiosyncrasy because I spent my early adulthood working in Middle Eastern studies at universities. And by the way, I thought I was left wing. I thought - I was surrounded by this, you know - and Middle Eastern studies at universities is like a cult. I wouldn't - like, to call it left wing is to give it too much sort of mainstream credit, right? It's a cult. Cult is probably the wrong word, too, but it's a bizarre - it needs to have a
humorous British academic novel written about it, right? It's just a little strange subset of humanity. No - the way - the stuff they talk about, the things they believe, it has nothing to do with reality.

If you know something about the Middle East, if you've been to the Middle East, if you've read about in the newspaper, and then you listen to what they - how they talk about it at panels at the Middle Eastern Studies Association, you think, this is a virtual Middle East that these people made up, right? So I say that with no - this is - no - this is a description of reality, right? So I thought I was left wing because I thought, OK, I'm surrounded by all these crazy people who believe these crazy things, some of them very intelligent - have insight into this or that aspect of the world, but in terms of their political views, they're out of their minds. But out there in the real world beyond academia, there's a more...

KOSLOFF: You're a mainstream Democrat.

DORAN: Yeah, I'm a mainstream Democrat. But then I - lo and behold, when I got sucked into the - it's only after 9/11 that I got sucked into the mainstream discussion. And then I found out, oh, actually, I'm not a mainstream Democrat at all.

ENJETI: And so after you found out - you find out you're not a mainstream Democrat and now you go through this Bush administration - I mean, let's go to the Obama administration. So you're sitting here, you're in Washington, D.C., post-out of the White House. What is the reaction and your continued education to the Obama presidency and your main takeaways?

DORAN: Well, the Obama presidency shocked me. I regard myself as an unbelievable - unbelievably good analyst of Barack Obama. I believe that I know every thought that goes through Barack Obama's mind, and I believe I'm a great help to conservatives, especially crazy conservatives who think, you know, he's a closet Muslim or he's a closet communist, all these kind of crazy ideas.

KOSLOFF: Your point - what you're getting at to is it doesn't require conspiracy to understand why he believes in the...

ENJETI: So tell us what...

DORAN: It - why am I...

ENJETI: Or, well, what did he believe?

(CROSSTALK)

DORAN: Let me restate. What makes you so good, Mike?

ENJETI: Yeah. What is it? What makes you so good about that?

DORAN: Well, I'm glad you asked. It's because I am pretty much his age, we went to the same kinds of schools, came from the same kind of background. I mean, this whole thing - dreams of my father - his father was never around. He grew up in a middle-class, white home in Hawaii,
and then he went to - I didn't grow up in Hawaii, but - and then he went to the same kinds of schools. And so - and you know, I spent a good chunk of my early adulthood in the Ivy League, right? And so I know how Ivy League professors think about the world. And that's how Barack Obama thinks about the world. Now, what distinguishes him from Ivy League professors is he's an outstanding retail politician. And so he can take that Ivy League world view, which is a utopian world view - it's a world view highly critical of American power and utopian at the same time - and he can translate it into a concrete political agenda.

**KOSLOFF:** What's utopian about it?

**DORAN:** Because it's a one world-ism. It's a transnational progressivism, which believes that we are - that the countries of the world are converging, becoming more alike and that unity - you know, comedy among the nations and unity is possible.

**KOSLOFF:** And good in and of itself.

**DORAN:** And good in and of itself and also possible. And American power should be used in order to bring about that convergence.

**ENJETI:** On a policy level, let's tease that out, what did that look like under the Obama administration?

**DORAN:** The Iran deal.

**ENJETI:** OK.

**DORAN:** The Iran - what it looks like - it means a belief in the notion that greater interdependencies among countries is going to lead to greater convergence and understanding. Greater prosperity is going to lead to greater democratization and understanding, and that leads to the belief that - this is - by the way, this is not simply a left - this is an American point of view.

**KOSLOFF:** Yeah. And to play devil's advocate on this, too - right? - if you look at the history of the post-World War II era - right? - the story that you could tell is, we have the European Union, we have NAFTA, we have institutions such as the United Nations. This is sort of...

**DORAN:** And our...

**ENJETI:** The Marshall Plan.

**DORAN:** And our China policy.

**KOSLOFF:** Yeah.

**ENJETI:** Right.

**DORAN:** Our China policy for decades was built on this idea, right? The - and so that's why China builds everything in Guangzhou that we buy in Walmart and we - you know, they send those cheap goods to us and we give them our debt, and this is going to create a kind of
convergence. And so the same idea - that - it was basically that same idea is what prompted them to...

ENJETI: And this wasn't necessarily something that was shared - that was only on the left. I mean, this was largely predominant on the right, too.

DORAN: Oh...

ENJETI: This was a...

DORAN: Absolutely.

KOSLOFF: What does right-wing utopianism look like?

DORAN: Well - no - I - this is the - what the Trump - this is what Trump opened up. And it shocked me to find out that a lot of people that were conservative foreign policy experts were actually in agreement with an enormous amount of transnational progressivism. The disagreements were about use of military force and things like that, but the basic world view was the same. And that's - that was a real eye-opener to me.

KOSLOFF: Do you - what - in fairness to - right - the sort of mainstream interpretation of the post-World War II era, what did they get right? So if we look at that story of convergence - right? - because once again, there haven't been great power wars since World War II, outside a few isolated incidents. What about that story is correct?

DORAN: Well, look, I think there's a - I think there is value in spreading American - spreading democracy and American values. And you can see the story in Japan, the story in South Korea, the story in Europe. These are all very positive stories. And there's a lot of truth to them. I think, though, that it became a kind of - after Reagan - a kind of canned ideology. The - a lot of the - a kind of dogma, and almost a kind of libertarian dogma about free markets and lack of a discussion of the American interest in all of this. It became a dogma disconnected from the notion of what's good for the American public. And that's a - that is the - that's the first problem with it. The second problem with it is when - that it doesn't actually work in certain areas. It's not working in China. The extent of the failure in China, we have yet to figure out, but it's not working. We can see that China is competing with us and China is using the - is using our openness against us. It's not - it didn't work in the Middle East. It's not going to work in the Middle East.

ENJETI: Do you think it's just about the collision of that framework with illiberalism - that it was, like, really, the first kind of contact that it had with authoritarianism in China and then with illiberalism in the Middle East? Is that what ultimately led to the questioning?

DORAN: No, I think it's more than that. It's certainly that, but I think it's more than that. It's not working in Europe anymore. The - I mean, the European - I think the European project - the EU project - the idea of an - you know, of an ever-closer union - it's over. The union is not going to get closer. And you can see there's a huge backlash. And to a certain extent, the Europeans are competitors with us now - to a certain extent. I'm - we - I think they are - I think the Europeans
are our allies. I think you have to work to build the alliance, but the alliance - I mean, to maintain the alliance. But the alliance that was built to win World War II and then to win the Cold War is no longer configured to meet the challenges of the moment. And that's what Trump is so good at doing is - and that's what his election shows us is he's so good at raising these questions. I'm not sure he has the right answer in every regard, but he's raised these questions that the rest of us should come in and start working on - really - very difficult political and intellectual questions that we should be working on.

ENJETI: You referenced this earlier - you said that there are so many people who are just waiting for Trump to leave so that they can return to the old consensus. Do you think that would actually be possible in any sort of new administration, given how much the Overton window on these issues has shifted in the foreign policy elite, or would it truly be a reversion to kind of a 2012 consensus on how the world works?

DORAN: We're not going back. And I think that's getting increasingly clear. I would - I'm not really sure because I've stopped arguing with the people who believe that we were going back.

KOSLOFF: Well, let's talk about what going back looks like, right? So it seems to me - it's easy to imagine a Democratic or Republican administration putting something together like the Trans-Pacific Partnership all over again. So we could go back in that way. I think it's easy to see a Democratic or Republican administration reengaging with the expansion of NATO. I just - I think it's possible to argue that we're never going to intervene in countries the way we did during the Bush administration. This is also why the Obama administration handled Syria the way it did. What ways, though, can't we - what other ways can we not revert? I guess that's what I'm confused about.

DORAN: No, I think that the - I think that the kind of default interventionism that we had is gone.

KOSLOFF: OK.

DORAN: And you can - you can see that there's this point on the spectrum where Donald Trump, Rand Paul and Bernie Sanders all kind of converge, or their...

KOSLOFF: Aligned.

DORAN: ...Their constituencies aligned. Or there's - let's just say there is a - there is a constituency that each one of them has within their - among their voters who is saying, what the hell are we doing in these places? Why are my tax dollars going for this? How is this serving the interests of the American middle-class?

ENJETI: And so this is a very powerful feeling that has really - has penetrated a lot of the country. Now a lot of politicians have seized upon this to embrace a purely, a total non-interventionist ideology, something that really - like, that goes against American intervention or action abroad. What do they get wrong about that? Why is that not the right approach?

DORAN: That I would - you didn't name anyone, but I would say that that's sort of where Tucker Carlson sometimes ends up - Rand Paul, for sure. But on the things that I follow most closely -
the Middle East - I see Tucker Carlson sliding into that position with - and with respect to Iran. The assumption in the libertarian world - and Tucker Carlson seems, some of his commentary - is that we are causing the conflict with Iran. Our belligerence, our support for Israel, the neo-cons - right? - they're the ones who are doing it. And if we'll just have a lighter touch - this is what Obama said in his first inaugural. You know, he'll - he's going to reach out to Iran. And if Iran reaches back, then we can cut a deal. There's a kind of feeling out there among the foreign policy elite - it's always been there - that Iran and the United States are natural allies and that it's American policy - among a segment of the foreign policy elite - that Iran and the United States are natural allies. And for failing to realize the potential of that natural alliance, it's due to a failure of American policy. And this is just totally wrong, objectively wrong in my view. Iran has invariably hostile attitudes toward the United - the order that the United States represents in the Middle East and toward the United States. And it has hegemonic aspirations in the Middle East.

**KOSLOFF:** So you're getting to where the tension lies, especially on the sort of new right, the populist nationalist right. Some would argue the U.S. shouldn't even be concerned with the order in the Middle East - right? - because you're saying they're challenging the order in the Middle East. Like, if you're a populist nationalist, who cares?

**DORAN:** Well...

**KOSLOFF:** Shouldn't we be focused on China? You yourself were bringing up China.

**DORAN:** I think China is the No. 1 - I think China is the No. 1 threat. And I think we need to understand the potential of a Chinese-Iranian alliance. And an American - what happens if America withdraws from the Middle East? Iran takes over all the oil of the Persian Gulf - that's what happens - in an alignment with Russia, in an alignment with China, or in an alignment with both. Imagine a world in which - and it's not hard at all when you look at what's going on in the world today - Russia, China, Iran dominate Eurasia - the Eurasian landmass, threaten Europe, and then control all of the oil coming out of the - coming out of the Persian Gulf. That means they control Europe's oil. Then Europe becomes...

**KOSLOFF:** Already natural gas...

**ENJETI:** Yeah, right.

**KOSLOFF:** Russia already controls Europe's natural gas, too.

**ENJETI:** Well, and I think, Mike, what scares these people, what they would say is, well, Mike, you know, every time I hear about hegemonic aspirations in the Middle East, then I know that the next step is a ground invasion of Tehran. So what's the answer? What is the...

**DORAN:** Well, that's silly. That's silly, and that's the false choice that the Obama administration put before the American people with regard to the nuclear deal. It was - they presented it as the nuclear deal that I negotiated - or President Obama said the nuclear deal that I negotiated or war. And that nuclear deal was a complex of policies not just about the nuclear program. It also meant turning a blind eye to Iranian interventionism in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen and elsewhere. And we're seeing before our eyes these days the results of all - the results of all that.
Anyway, that's a false choice. The false choice, it's between - the choice is between appeasement of Iran that we saw in the Obama administration and a policy of containing Iran. And we can put together a policy of containing Iran and deterring it with a combination of American military power and allies on the ground. We have to build up allies on the ground. That's the key.

KOSLOFF: I think the key to the way you're articulating this case then is that you're not saying, well, Iran is a non-liberal regime. You're not talking about how they don't share American values. The way you're framing this entire course of policy action is in America - is a - in this sort of America-centric term sheet. How do you - how does the way you're describing the Iranian problem contrast with the way it would've been described during the Bush administration, though, because what we're trying to get on in this episode - right? - is how the right's language on the foreign policy side's changing.

DORAN: Well, I - so I think that since the fall of the Cold War, the United States got stupid about strategy, and especially after 9/11, and we stopped talking about - if you want to understand the Middle East, international relations, international politics, the Middle East, the beginning, the middle and the end of the discussion is about states, and it's about the power of states. And you talk about nonstate actors like al-Qaida and ISIS and the Palestinian, you know - Hamas, Hezbollah and so on, the Iranian proxies in the context of the struggle between states. That's - and we stopped doing that. We stopped doing it on the right, and we stopped doing it on the left. And we became stupid about strategy, and into the vacuum moved the - we built up this incredible...

KOSLOFF: Transnational framework.

DORAN: Well, transnational framework, but also a counterterrorism bureaucracy for fighting al-Qaida and fighting ISIS, which is a - which wins the debate when people don't have a clear vision of what they're doing. When - I saw it in the White House time and time again. When you're sitting in a room and people are confused about the Middle East, the counterterrorism guys are never confused. They want to go whack terrorists, and they're always there to say, I want to whack terrorists. And it's a domestic American imperative because we can't have another 9/11. Now, these are all valid arguments, but you're not going to have a successful counterterrorism strategy if you can't build a stable order. Building a stable order requires states. So that - we have - the counterterrorism has to be understood within states, not as a thing in and of itself.

ENJETI: So, Mike, you recently spoke at the National Conservatism Conference to talk about foreign policy and a way forward. This is...

KOSLOFF: And that conference was about sort of trying to sort of take all these sort of post-2016 conservative forces, whether it's Tucker Carlson or John Bolton or J.D. Vance, who we had on this program - trying to sort of work out a new framework for the right.

ENJETI: Yeah. So where in that - where - how are you navigating that in particular, which is at this conference, there was John Bolton, there was Tucker Carlson, and there was J.D. Vance.
What is the thread that is there between John Bolton and between Tucker Carlson? Or is there any thread whatsoever?

DORAN: There is a thread.

ENJETI: Yeah.

DORAN: There's a...

KOSLOFF: And fascinating thing just before you go, we should add, J.D. Vance on the show couldn't articulate what that was.

ENJETI: And we taped the show at that podcast (ph).

DORAN: Oh, no, there's definitely a thread between John Bolton and Tucker Carlson. There's also a disagreement. Around about 2000, John Bolton wrote an article in the - I think it was the Chicago Law Review where he talks about globalism and a globalist foreign policy, and he critiques the American foreign policy elite for being globalist, and he depicts the struggle as between nationalist and globalist. So John Bolton was Trumpian before Trump was Trumpian.

ENJETI: Far ahead of his time.

DORAN: He was way ahead of his time. And John Bolton, if you ask him - when I worked with him in the White House, what - if you ask him, are you a neocon, he would say, no, I am a con. The thing about John Bolton as a conservative kind of realist in foreign policy the way realism should be if it actually existed as a, you know, as a school, he's pro-Israel. But he's not about spreading democracy at all. Now, he has a willingness to use military force that makes people think he's a neocon. And that's where - that's the point where he - that's the point where he and Tucker Carlson - Tucker Carlson would be kind of militantly anti-interventionist these days. But in terms of their basic - the basic ideas they're working with, they're identical. It's just their kind of receptivity to interventionism.

KOSLOFF: And I need to ask you this because the terms that we use in these debates are incredibly charged, right? It's interesting that he was referring to globalism in the 2000s, right before a lot of the sort of dynamics around it came about. How do you - do you use the word globalist when you're discussing foreign policy terms?

DORAN: Yeah, sure. I do because I think it's a real thing.

KOSLOFF: So it's a - so...

DORAN: I mean, there's...

ENJETI: Yeah, and what is it? What is globalism?

DORAN: Well, there's globalization and there's globalism. Globalization - I think it's useful to make the distinction. Globalization is the condition of our world.

KOSLOFF: Phenomena, yeah.
DORAN: It's a phenomenon that we - that none of it - that we are powerless to change. Things...

KOSLOFF: Technology.

DORAN: Technology. Supply chains on for automobiles are, you know - run through...

ENJETI: From ninety different countries.

DORAN: ...Ninety different countries. The U.S. military is engaged all around the globe. With this podcast, we can do a press of a button, and it's going to go out to everyone simultaneously.

KOSLOFF: The world is flat, yeah.

DORAN: The world is flat. OK, that's globalization. But globalism is the ideology that says that this is a good thing. It is a good thing. It cannot be moderated in any way. We should all adapt to it, and we should work to promote it. And the people who - and we - and the people who stand up and say, hey, what about the people who are left behind by globalization? They just don't count.

KOSLOFF: So there's a lot to unpack there because I really love the way you framed that. Who's been left behind?

DORAN: Well, the entire working class, the industrial working class all across the heartland - all across the Western world, with the exception of Germany, really.

ENJETI: And even then, they're seeing some problems, right?

DORAN: They must be. I mean, sooner or later, it's going to come to them as well. But, I mean, if you grew up in and in a steel town in Ohio - or any factory in Pennsylvania, even, not just steel - and the factory goes under and all the jobs go to China and our elite says to you, sorry, you're just - you know, you're just the losers in natural selection - the economic natural selection.

KOSLOFF: So devil's advocate - because we've had multiple guests on the other side of this globalization question, whether it's Megan McArdle and George Will - what they will say is globalization is the result of markets. Markets are making things more efficient. They're creating things where - a lot prosperity. If we look at our lives 100 years ago, as George Will said, it's a lot better than it was then. And if we look to our future, Megan McArdle said on the show that it will be more prosperous for our grandchildren. What is your response to their defense of the globalization process?

DORAN: Well, I think - look, let me just - let me not attack it morally, although I think it's morally - that is a morally obtuse point of view, but forget about that. It's a politically obtuse point of view because those people are not going to go away. And those people are - those people feel that their communities are being destroyed. They feel that nobody's listening to them about that. There's going to be someone who's going to come along and say, I'm listening to you, and that's what Donald Trump is saying. It's what Bernie Sanders is saying. So you've got it on the right
and you've got it on the left. It's - it is now a part of our politics. They're fighting over those voters on the left and the right.

ENJETI: It's a fundamental distinction in the value of what prosperity is, which is whether, you know, it's the prices and your consumption goods, or whether it's the value of something - and Matt Stoller, who was on this podcast, talked about this. It's a producerist versus a consumerist framework. So it's interesting to - you are one of the people who will say and incorporate your - the domestic political situation into your foreign policy. Now, is that something that we need to see more of if the right is going to move forward in this realignment world?

DORAN: Absolutely. I mean, it doesn't - the two are - domestic politics and foreign policy are different. But if you fashion these ideas about what the United States should be doing in the world and you have no concept whatsoever about whether you can sell them to the American people, that's ridiculous. You have to - we have to be aware of this. Now, the question is - this is why we get back to that question of whether Trump is a flash in the pan or not because I think a lot of my colleagues here in Washington think that that, you know, we're one terrorist attack away from the American public saying, go intervene in everything. And so this idea that non-interventionism is something that's lasting rather than just a temporary fad - right - you know, the idea that Trump actually represents something deeper than just, you know, the twitchings of his own brain is...

KOSLOFF: So this helpful - this is actually interesting because what - but here's the thing, right? Post-Vietnam, America is obviously going through a non-interventionist phase. And one could have very easily said, look, post-World War II moment was a flash in the pan, we had Korea, we sort of rebuilt Europe. But now, after the debacle in Vietnam, which is far worse than anything that happened the Middle East the past 20 years in terms of blood and treasure - but we came back. You then have Desert Storm. You have the interventions in Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the Iraq War. Do you think this is permanent?

DORAN: Do I think what is permanent?

ENJETI: The current - the reaction to Iraq, the reaction to Afghanistan - is - and what Marshall's getting at is, yeah, we had the isolationist moment. You know, Ford in South Vietnam, 1975. But we came back. We became a great power nation and believed very much in...

KOSLOFF: Well, not even the great power...

ENJETI: ...In its own strength.

KOSLOFF: ...Intervention - interventionism came back.

ENJETI: And an interventionist nation. So is this - what he's saying - and I think this is a great question - is there a permanence to the current attitude?

DORAN: Yes, I think so - well, I mean, to the extent - nothing is permanent in life.

KOSLOFF: Within reason, of course.
DORAN: But within reason, yes. No, I - that's the difference between me and the others that I'm talking about - is that I think there is something permanent about it. And I think - you know, you mentioned - you know, mentioned Tucker Carlson - or the debate at the conservatism conference. My talk got criticized from two sides. It got...

ENJETI: So you're right.

DORAN: Of course I'm right. I'm in the healthy middle - you know, the sane, rational middle.

ENJETI: (Laughter).

KOSLOFF: You're a moderate. You're a moderate.

ENJETI: A moderate nationalist.

DORAN: I'm rational. And, you know, I'm neither left nor right. I'm an American.

ENJETI: Give us the American foreign policy.

KOSLOFF: Yeah.

DORAN: So - no, so the - but on one side, they said I was too interventionist. This is the sort of - from The American Conservative, I mean, talking about the publication from sort of that point of view. And from the Cato sort of point of view - libertarian point of view. They believe that we can just cut a deal with Iran and get out of the Middle East. And then, on the other side - my point was because the non-interventionism is now permanent because we do have priorities in Asia - and China is rising - and so on, we don't have unlimited resources to throw in the Middle East, so we have to have others pick up the slack. That means allies. That logic leads me, inevitably, to - obviously, Israel is our ally in that regard, but also Turkey. And I say we should work very hard to try to patch things up with Turkey, and that immediately gets a lot of people nervous.

KOSLOFF: And I'm thinking back to my...

DORAN: Also Saudi Arabia - that's also...

KOSLOFF: And I'm thinking back to my question about the Vietnam era, and the key thing here and what's different between now and then - thanks for your articulate - because it's telling me to get to this. At core, the 1990s were still a unipolar world. The U.S. didn't have a rival. You know, even in the '70s and '80s, the Soviet Union was not the sort of pure competitor that China is going to be in the next 10 to 15 years, so I think that's a sort of key dynamic that has to be illustrated. And the difference...

DORAN: Exactly. And we had this military revolution and - we had a military revolution. We had...

KOSLOFF: In terms of the revolution of military affairs with the technology...

DORAN: Yes.
KOSLOFF: ...And those sort of things.

DORAN: Yes. And that - and so we had a moment of unbelievable military superiority. We had this incredible economic surge under Reagan, and that continued under Clinton. And then we had the tech revolution, and then the other countries started to absorb these things, so we have serious competitors out there now.

KOSLOFF: Globalization worked.

DORAN: Globalization worked.

ENJETI: You know, the unipolarity was dispersed across the global order, basically, and now we're back in an era of great-state competition. So I think to tie a bow on this entire discussion, which is how is the - what is the way forward after Trump? So regardless of Democrat, Republican - the realization - if you could have and hammer into the mind of a foreign policy elite in this country - and there can be differences on this. What should the core mindset be going forward?

DORAN: I think that, because of the phenomena that you just described, the key actors in the world are nation-states, and that's what the - that's what I think - another thing that we all shared at the nationalism conference. Nation-states - and we should be thinking about alliances with like-minded states.

KOSLOFF: Don't think of institute - so it's - so the way you should think about the world isn't international institutions. It's not about the EU.

ENJETI: U.N., European Union...

DORAN: No.

KOSLOFF: It's about the states.

DORAN: It's about the states, and there are certain states that are poised to deal with the competition that's coming. You can see them, and Israel is one of them, right? Israel is going to be one of our best allies, if not our best ally in the world, because they have a vibrant economy, they have a first-class intelligence organization, they have an absolute top-tier military, and they are willing to use their military to look after their interests on their own. We just backstop them. Again, Australia - same question. If the - so if it's against Iran in the Middle East, we've got a country like Israel that we can rely on. If it's a country like China, we have Australia - of course, Japan, South Korea as well. But clearly, when you look across the board, Australia just jumps up as an incredible asset. Also, the United Kingdom, I think, is going to come back after Brexit. I mean, there are - these are nation-states that have a whole set of attributes that make them great partners for the United States.

KOSLOFF: And what's so fascinating is - and this is the way - because I think it's important that we illustrate for the audience how this discussion has changed. What you're not proposing is - we need a NATO for Asia Pacific. You're not saying, we need to leverage the United States' weight in international decisions. You are saying, at a very core level - and this is sort of the
whole return of history point. You're arguing that we operate in this framework, and that's the key thing here.

**DORAN:** I think there has to be a kind of third way between interventionism and isolationism, and the key issue is deterrence. We need to deter the bad actors in the world. And I would add one other thing. I'm worried - I think that the non-interventionist mood is more than just a mood. I think it's going to be a larger trend that we have to contend with, and I think we have to be careful that it not go too far.

**KOSLOFF:** What's too far?

**DORAN:** Well, too far - I mean, we...

**KOSLOFF:** Actual isolationism?

**DORAN:** Well yeah. We have to deter bad actors. We cannot - the lesson that we learned - I mean, the World War II analogies - I'm going to take them too far, but we did learn something. Eisenhower learned something from the withdrawal of the United States and, you know, the belief that we can just let Europe take care of itself. Forget about Asia, and don't worry about this alliance between Germany and Japan. Well, there came a moment when we realized that, actually, our freedom is dependent, to a certain extent, on the freedom of Europe. We have a stake in the freedom of Europe. We have a stake in the freedom - we have a stake in the independence and the power of other free countries, and we need to build on that, and we need to have - build up deterrence against those bad actors. Now, deterrence doesn't necessarily mean interventionism, but we need to be - that's where we need to be thinking very hard. How do we deter China? How do we deter Iran? And who are our partners in that deterrence?

**ENJETI:** Well, a well-articulated case for deterrence and a third way between neocon interventionism and isolation. Mike Doran, thank you so much for joining us.

**DORAN:** Thank you.

**KOSLOFF:** Thanks for joining us.

**ENJETI:** Mike recently hosted Senator Ted Cruz at Hudson Institute, where they unpacked the ongoing debate over the interventionist versus isolationist approaches to foreign policy. Go to hudson.org to check out the video and the transcript of that discussion.

**KOSLOFF:** As always, we hope you enjoyed this episode. Please rate us five stars and subscribe to THE REALIGNMENT wherever you listen to your podcasts.

**ENJETI:** Thanks so much for joining us, and we'll see you next week.