

Center for Strategic and International Studies

**Bob Schieffer's "About the News" with H. Andrew Schwartz
Podcast**

Subject: "Race to the Top: Graham Allison on Balancing China"

Speakers:

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(Music plays.)

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'm Bob Schieffer.

H. ANDREW SCHWARTZ: And I'm Andrew Schwartz.

MR. SCHIEFFER: And these are conversations about the news. We're in the midst of a communications revolution. We have access to more information than any people in history. But are we more informed, or just overwhelmed by so much information we can't process it?

MR. SCHWARTZ: Our podcast is a collaboration of the Bob Schieffer College of Communication at TCU and the CSIS in Washington.

MR. SCHIEFFER: In this first year of Donald Trump's presidency, we're talking to the reporters who are covering the president the closest.

(Music plays.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: Our guest this time is Graham Allison, long-time professor at Harvard. He is the author of a new and a very important book, which I finished last week. It is called "Destined for War." And basically, it is about managing the relationship with China. Graham Allison is the director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at the Kennedy School. Professor, thank you so much for coming.

We want to talk about this book because I, like you, believe that managing the relationship with China is probably the single most challenging thing faced by any administration right now. But let's just start first with the news, the latest news. You know, I was in the Air Force. And I'm glad I had that experience, because the Air Force song, the official song, is "Off We Go, Into the Wild Blue Yonder." (Laughter.) And every morning when I wake up – (laughs) – I'm thinking, here we go, off into the wild blue yonder. There just seems to be a surprise a day. What's your take on what's happening right now in Washington?

GRAHAM ALLISON: Well, it's a great question. And if I had a good answer, I would be wiser than I am. I think the place to start is, first, I wrote a piece three years ago arguing that D.C. had come to stand for dysfunctional capital. So D.C. had become dysfunctional as a system long before Trump arrived. And I think the hard fact is we should start there, that basically – you know, Congress hadn't passed a serious law for seven years, right, under Democrats, Republicans, whatever. And for many people, as they observe the American political system, they're having questions about whether it now functions, and coming to the conclusion – a negative conclusion. And in our democracy, that's a pretty devastating fact. So I'd start there.

I think the arrival of Trump and Trumpism is, in some sense, a reflection of this judgment substantially across the country that the Washington establishment doesn't work, that the governing class is not governing effectively, that the ruling class, you know, they feel suspicious about, that the establishment or the elites or the folks that are supposed to be experts. So I think

there's something pretty deep going on in the society. And then I think what you see in Washington is a reflection of that.

Now, then, to have the president be essentially a reality TV star, who was very successful as a reality TV star, but remember what is reality TV? Reality TV is something that's totally fake that's presented as if it was real. And it is actually the most successful – the most watched form of television in our country today. So that takes us back to what about our society? So I think there's some pretty deep questions now.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You know, I agree with you on the idea that reality TV is really fake. And I always remember the days when Walter Cronkite, the most trusted man in America, was the anchor of the CBS evening news. And Walter was, first and foremost, a serious journalist. He wasn't an announcer. He was somebody who'd been a reporter, who knew what a news story was. And he was a wonderful leader. But when – and people were always wanting to do stories about Walter Cronkite and CBS News.

And from the moment a visiting journalist came into the CBS News headquarters in New York, and you turned the camera on, it became a different place. When people would have the lineup and should we do this story or that story, every person who had a hand – and these were all trained journalists – instead of saying, we don't want to do that, or we ought to do this because, it became a First Amendment essay on why we should or shouldn't do something. And making out the lineup would sometimes take more than an hour, things that we would sometimes do in 20 minutes.

And these were all good people. But I guess the point here is when you bring a television camera into any situation, it's no longer the same as it would be without a camera. Now, those of us in journalism, we think we want cameras at the White House press briefing and all of that. But cameras do change the atmosphere, there's no question about that.

MR. ALLISON: I agree. I had the good fortune to know Frank Stanton very well. He became a very close colleague. And he actually had hired Cronkite. And he worshiped – I mean, Walter was in the tradition of what – of the best tradition of journalism, just as you said. But he said the same thing you said. He said, you know, for almost any environment, show them a television camera and a little greasepaint, and the whole relationship changes. (Laughter.)

MR. SCHIEFFER: But let's talk about this administration, as all administrations, do. They say, you know, we're doing a good job here. But if the press would just tell the truth about what they're doing. It's not the policy that's the problem, it's the communication. It's the public relations part of it that's the problem. And if we can get that right, everybody would understand what we're trying to do.

MR. ALLISON: Well, and I think that that's a recurring illusion, as you say. And it's more tempting to blame the messenger or the reflection of the messenger in the news, than it is to blame the performance or the problem. But I think that the reality is that the problems are extremely challenging. The reality is that China now has a bigger economy than the American economy, that China has just in the past generation – just the past 25 years gone from nowhere to

being everywhere, to rivaling us in every space. And for everybody, that's a very uncomfortable situation if we're accustomed to being the ruling power and organizing the international order. So that's just the real problems. Or Russia and Putin are real problems, whatever anybody reports about it or whatever we do about it.

Then there's the doing, the policy. Well, if we have a dysfunctional government, the performance is not very good. Then we have a press that tries to report on that, sometimes doing a better job, sometimes doing a worse job. But I think the collection of all that, as people look at it, is to say: This is pretty ugly. Now, interestingly, I've tried to make it a practice, though I haven't been able to do it completely, that I would only come to Washington in the morning and leave before night, lest I get infected by the madness, as it's occurred over the last year. (Laughter.) Sometimes I have to spend the night. Tonight I have to be here.

But basically, if you go to the countryside – I just came from San Francisco yesterday, where I spent the day with VCs in Silicon Valley talking about Thucydides trap and China, whatever. If you look at the newspaper, the San Francisco paper, you don't find any of the stories of Washington – maybe on page 17. If you talk to people in Silicon Valley, they're hardly interested in what's happening in the Washington circus, as they think about it. So, again, there's probably multiple realities here.

MR. SCHIEFFER: I'm going to shift to China, because that's why we asked you to come and join us today. But you brought up Putin and Russia. What is your take on the president's response to all things Russian? I don't know that the president's done anything wrong in connection to Russia, I have no idea. But he acts like someone who has something he does not want the American people to know about in connection with that. Do you think there is something there?

MR. ALLISON: I think you put it exactly right. And I think most of the press has actually been not putting as fairly as you put it. I think that so far, from the evidence that we have, there's nothing there. But on the other hand, Trump's kind of resistance and attempt to – the behavior would lead a normal person to say this seems a little odd, a little suspicious. Now, I can tell the good news story and the bad news story. I think the good news story is that the demonization of Putin has not made America safer. I think Putin is demonic and he's a dangerous character. And I think his behavior is dangerous for us. That's a reality. But just demonizing him and blaming him for things, I have to ask about our security. At the end of each round, are we better off, are we worse off? And the answer is, we're worse off.

So Ronald Reagan had no problem whatever – Ronald Reagan, for whom I worked with enthusiasm – had no problem whatever saying these bastards are evil, the evil empire, and our objective is to undermine them. That was on the one hand. And on the other hand, we have to engage them and cooperate with them, collude with them in the word of Washington today, to try to keep us from stumbling into a war we don't want. So the good news story would be that Trump had some sense for that. I have a little difficulty believing that, but it's conceivable. That would be saying that Trump had basically the Henry Kissinger view of the problem.

On the other hand, I think the behavior would also be consistent with the notion that

sometime in his past at some point there was some financial dealing or something that went on that would make him not want to go to that space. And I think we don't know. And I think that's why having Mueller and an investigation is the right way to proceed. And while it's frustrating for the press especially, that's chasing this story, that want to know what happened immediately, I'm very suspicious of trying to understand things by the process of leaking and press and whatever.

I think the reason why we have investigations and FBI and a guy like Mueller is that they can look into a matter and, lo and behold, things that otherwise you thought somebody was guilty, lo and behold, they turn out to be innocent sometimes. And sometimes you thought they were innocent, the turn out to be guilty. But that process, I have confidence in.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's talk about your book here. You call it, "Destined for War." And then you, if I recall the title, how to avoid the Thucydides –

MR. ALLISON: Thucydides trap, yes.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Trap. Tell us what the trap is.

MR. ALLISON: OK. So Thucydides trap is a dangerous dynamic that occurs when a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power. So Thucydides – everybody should have him as part of their mental library – was the founder of history. Indeed, in your terms, you would think of him really as actually the first investigative journalist, who was determined to get the facts right. So he went around in classical Greece, where there was a tragic war between Athens and Sparta, and tried to write down what really happened in order to illuminate the situation, in the hope that people could read about it and not make the same mistakes over.

So he wrote the first history book. And you can go and actually download his book, the "Peloponnesian War." And every page – read the first hundred pages. Every page will knock your socks off. So Thucydides, the founder of history. So he had a big idea. And his big idea was – he said, quote, "It was the rise of Athens and the fear that this instilled in Sparta that made the war inevitable."

So a rising power, like Athens or like China today, and its impact on the ruling power, like Sparta or like the U.S. today, becomes a dangerous dynamic in which then third party actions – in the case of Athens and Sparta it was a conflict between Corinth and Corcyra, just minor parties or, in the current situation, a third-party action like Kim Jong-un launching ICBMs – could provide the trigger that then leads to an action by the U.S., like attacking North Korea, and then reaction by China, like entering a war, that would get us to some place like the Korean War. And we should remember, North Korea dragged China and the U.S. into war in 1950 when neither party wanted a war with each other.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Let's go back and talk about how, as you point out so rightly in your book, what happened with Athens and Sparta happened over and over again in history when people did fall into this trap. The rising power challenges the existing power. And most of the time, overwhelming, it ended in war.

MR. ALLISON: So I look, in the book, at the last 500 years. So this is kind of a capsule version of the last 500 years. I find 16 cases in which a rising power threatens to displace a ruling power. Think of the rise of Germany and its impact on Britain prior to World War I. In 12 of the 16 cases, the outcome is war. In four of the 16 cases, the outcome is not war. So Thucydides line about inevitable is an exaggeration. But to say that the odds are substantially against us is correct. And I think the reason why this is the right lens for understanding what's actually happening today in the relationship between the U.S. and China is that it reminds us that even though the U.S. understands a war with China would be nuts – nobody is in favor of a war with China. And everybody in China knows a war with the U.S. would be crazy. Nobody wants a war with the U.S.

Under these conditions, external events that would otherwise be inconsequential or easily managed – like the assassination of an archduke in 1914, that became the trigger for what became a war that burned down the whole house of Europe – again, an unbelievable story – could, in this situation, just like what we're seeing unfold in Korea today, lead Kim Jong-un to try to test ICBMs that can deliver a nuclear warhead against San Francisco. And Trump saying: I'm simply not going to allow that, which he can prevent by attacking the launching pads that would test those ICBMs, and North Korea responding by attacking Seoul and killing a million people overnight, and the U.S. responding to that by trying to prevent them doing more damage to South Korea, so destroy all the targets that we can find, whereupon we have the second Korean War.

And the second Korean War will end, Secretary of Defense Mattis said, with a unified Korea, without Pyongyang, ruled by Seoul, if China doesn't enter the war. But I was just in Beijing three weeks ago talking about Thucydides trap. We were there – this is kind of their central talking question now. And basically, many Chinese told me they think the matter was settled in 1950, that they're not going to have a unified Korea that's a military ally of the U.S. on their border – period. They went to war with us in 1950 to prevent that when they were only 1/50th our size. Now they think they're about – you know, they're getting to be close to our size. So that matter, they believe, is settled.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Well, let me ask you about the Trump tweets where, you know, he says, we want China to help us with North Korea. Then he said, they didn't help us. And it's almost like, well, why didn't they? This is a simple matter. It's not a simple matter. Explain why that's not a simple matter.

MR. ALLISON: OK. Thank you. That's a great question. One of the – I mean, one of the charms of our president is that because he is almost like a blank slate for all these topics, he begins with the notion that things are simple, but then when he hears that they're complex, he says, OK. So he gave a briefing, actually, to The Wall Street Journal right after the Mar-a-Largo summit with Xi Jinping where he told Xi Jinping: Look, this North Korea problem is simple. You can solve it. But if you don't solve it, I am. And you're not going to like the way I do it. And he said, Xi Jinping told him, no, it's complicated. This is complicated. And then he explained to him some of the complications. So why is this complicated?

So, from a Chinese point of view, first, they have no sympathy whatever for Kim Jong-un. They call him the brat. If they could get rid of him, I think they would. But he's there. He's an independent actor next door. That's number one.

Number two, they do not want a Korea that's unified that's on their border – that's just, again, right on their border – that's an ally of the United States. Think of for us Cuba. When Teddy Roosevelt became, you know, the president, he looked up and sees Cuba with Spanish there. He thinks, what the hell are Spanish doing in Cuba? Cuba's right on our – you know, right on our doorstep. Actually, when John Kennedy looked at communists in Cuba, when Castro was a puppet basically of the Soviet Union, he said: What are they doing there? And we tried to overthrow them. So basically, bigger, stronger countries do not like hostile or potential adversaries on their border or near their border occupying territories. So that's a second point. They don't want to have a unified Korea on their border.

Third, they don't want to have Kim Jong-un testing ICBMs. They tell him: Don't do this. And he does it anyhow. So you say, why don't they then simply cut off all the oil to him? Because if they did that they could over the course of a year cause chaos and a collapse of the government. Yes, they could. But in the chaos and the collapse, what's going to happen after that? Again, as several of them said to me in Beijing just three weeks ago, look, you guys think that the solution to every problem is lop off the head of the government. But look, you did this for Gadhafi. Look what happened in Libya. Chaos. You did this in Iraq. What happened? A mess. So basically, we got to figure out what happens after if we were to have some aftermath.

Now, what I wish and hope is that you would have adults on both sides sitting down saying: We have a problem, jointly. We have a serious problem with this third party that could drag us someplace we don't want to go. But under the conditions of a Thucydidian dynamic, where the rising power really thinks what you're doing there is trying to hold us down. So, from the Chinese point of view, the U.S. deployment of THAAD missiles in South Korea is part of an American plan and plot to maintain a position to contain China. That's how it looks for them. As one of them said to me: Look, if you guys would leave Korea there would be no problem here. The problem is your being here. If you weren't here, there would be a government in Korea that would be beholden to us, and we wouldn't let it have nuclear weapons. It would be, you know, a tributary, the way little states are to big states always.

And I said to him, but wait a minute, how did we come to be there? We only came to be here because your ally, North Korea, attacked South Korea, almost captured the whole peninsula. We came to the rescue. At the end of the war, we had an armistice at the 38th parallel. And in the 60 years since then, Korea has grown up to be one of the most successful countries – South Korea – in the world. It's got the 13th largest economy in the world. It has a vibrant democracy. We're very proud of what South Korea's become. We're not going anywhere. We're – you know, we're going to help protect South Korea. And from the Chinese point of view, well, OK. That's why this is a complicated problem.

MR. SCHIEFFER: So how do the Japanese fit into that? What is their position on all of this?

MR. ALLISON: Well, the Japanese are stressed. And they're going to be even more stressed because, again, most of us still don't quite get it. North Korea has developed a nuclear arsenal. So they probably have 20 or 25 bombs. North Korea has developed short-range missiles that can deliver bombs against South Korea. North Korea has developed medium-range missiles that can deliver nuclear bombs against Japan.

So Japan's thinking, holy Moses. So Japan has no love for anything Korean – not South Korea, not North Korea, or any Korea. They worry about Korea. But the idea that a North Korea could threaten Japan, they are terrified by that. Secondly, that something that Trump were to do to prevent North Korea being able to deliver nuclear weapons against U.S., like he can already do against Japan, could cause a war in which maybe a nuclear weapon would be launched against Japan, they're terrified about. So this relationship is going to be fraught over the period going forward.

MR. SCHIEFFER: If we could get a deal with China, you say if the Chinese could sit down with the Americans – and I would guess you would have to have the Japanese be a part of that because they have such a big stake in it – what do you think a deal that would satisfy everybody would look like? What would we have to give up. What would we have to pledge? What would they have to give up? What would they have to pledge?

MR. ALLISON: Oh, I think that's the right question. And I think that nobody wants to ask that, because it would cost them something. And I think if – so I don't have a good solution to this. But I think – I think if we had somebody that was the adult supervisor, they would say: Look, what is it that everybody's worried about most in the short run? North Korea testing ICBMs that would allow it to deliver bombs against the U.S. So why don't we get a freeze on that – no tests. Now, what are you going to give for that? And the Chinese proposal has been, well, why don't we have a freeze on U.S.-South Korean military exercises? Then Pentagon says, no, no, no. We're not going to let them mess with what we're doing, because our activities are just defensive. But I would say, well, OK, you're not going to get something for – if you don't give something. So that's a little bit of trade space there.

So now, that's round one. And if that gets you a year or two, now you have a time to begin exploring other items. If you really had tough-minded Americans and Chinese looking at it, could we imagine a situation where if China could somehow get control of North Korea, however they did it – however, OK? And therefore, there were not an independent North Korean nuclear threat to South Korea and Japan, could we imagine maybe American military basing changes? Maybe THAAD changes? Maybe even the number of U.S. troops in South Korea changes?

Now, from the Chinese point of view, they would say, well, what about the U.S.-South Korean defense treaty? You know, well, we would say that was there to protect South Korea from North Korea. But the Chinese might say, but now North Korea's going to be under our control. So would we trade anything in that space? I'm not so sure. And what will the South Koreans think about all of this? Because they're an independent actor. You can't do this over their head. And what would the Japanese think?

So it's a very tricky set of arrangements. Would be extremely challenging. But just as you said, would require giving something in order to get something.

MR. SCHIEFFER: My sense of it is that everybody, with the exception of North Korea, and I would include China in this – tell me if I'm wrong – feels better having the United States presence in the Pacific. The Chinese, if I understand it, would never say this publicly, but sort of look on us to keep a lid on Japan. The Japanese look on us to counter China, and so forth. I'm not sure anybody really wants the United States to withdraw from the Pacific, do you?

MR. ALLISON: Well, this is interesting. So that certainly has been the case. And I think that if you were to look back 10 years ago or 20 years ago you could even see in the Chinese conversations, at least among strategists in China, that they would say, well, if the U.S. were not there, would Japan be a nuclear weapon state? And how would we feel about that? And I've talked often to Chinese about why we're actually doing them a favor maintaining a nuclear umbrella over Japan. I think now, as they've become bigger and stronger, they are coming to think that this is our space here. This is our area. And it's time for you to back off and butt out. And I don't think they've worked their way through exactly what the consequences of that would be.

So again, in the Thucydidean story, when the rising power is getting bigger and stronger, it sees the current arrangements as constraining, because they were all put in place when I was little and small, and now I'm pushing up against them. So as they push up against, they imagine that the arrangement should change faster than the ruling power, who thinks: Wait a minute. This arrangement has been fantastic for everybody, especially for you. So from an American point of view, I explained to the Chinese, you have never seen such growth in your whole history. And the only reason why that was possible was the order that the U.S. established and has sustained for seven decades in Asia. That's made possible – that's enabled the Asian miracle for everybody – and nobody more – benefitted more than you. And they say, we appreciate that very much. But that was then, you know, and now is now.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Talk a little bit about how big China has become, because as I read your book – and I try to stay current on these things – I was astonished at just how far they've come in such a short time.

MR. ALLISON: It is a breathtaking story. So I even – for people who haven't tracked it, I try in just 25 pages in the chapter on the rise of China to capture some of the elements of it. And I quote Vaclav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic, who says: Things have happened so fast, we haven't even yet had time to be astonished. So I would say we should look at it and be astonished. So a country that was nowhere on any of the international league tables 25 years ago has now come to rival us and even surpass us in many, many dimensions. I have in the book a quiz which is the short version of a quiz I give to my students in my class at Harvard. So the Harvard version, it was 26 indicators of international performance. So the largest middle class, the biggest trading country, the largest number of billionaires, the fastest supercomputers, the number – largest number of high-speed rail, whatever, OK, 26.

And I ask students – biggest economy in the world – when could China become number

one? And Harvard students guess, well, some 2030, for this one, 2040 for that one, not in my lifetime for other ones. Then I show them chart two. And chart two says already. So in every one of these 26 dimensions, China has already overtaken the U.S. So it has the fastest supercomputers. It has the largest economy in the world. Again, most people in the U.S. have missed this fact. But by the single best yardstick for comparing national economies, the yardstick that both CIA and the IMF recommend, China in 2014 came to have a larger economy than the U.S. And on the current trajectory, if it keeps growing at its rate, which is about 6 percent-plus, and we keep growing at our rate, which is about 2 percent and a little bit, by 2024 it'll be half-again larger than we are.

So Americans have never seen anything like this. As Lee Kuan Yew puts it, you know, we have not been accustomed to a country as big as we are, that will be as strong as we are. And the adjustment to that fact is going to be extremely painful and is extremely painful. So every day in every way, as you watch your news, I'm predicting you will see China more and more in our face, pushing up against us in this way or that ways, in ways that actually challenge Americans about who we are. I mean, I'm a very red-blooded, even red-necked American from North Carolina. Somewhere I know it's written: USA means number one. That's got to be somewhere in the Bible or the Constitution or somewhere. But that's the way things are supposed to be.

So the idea of another country that's as big and strong as we are, and that's going to want to have more say and more sway, especially in its neighborhood, is a very uncomfortable situation. But that was the situation for Britain as Germany arose to be a challenger in 1900 and 1910 and 1914, that became a driver for a war. That was the – that's what was happening in Sparta as they looked at these crazy Athenians who seemed to be inventing everything, just to be out of control, again, pushing up against them. So I'd say that same sort of feeling is one that we have and that we're going to have to get over and get used to managing because otherwise we could find ourselves in a conflict that would be – afterwards, everyone would agree was completely stupid, that was to nobody's advantage, and could actually be catastrophic.

MR. SCHIEFFER: You outline in the book all of the ways that this could end up in war, and you outlined some of those today. But you also talk about how we can avoid this trap. How do we do that?

MR. ALLISON: Well, the starting point, I would say, is Santayana's good line that only those who fail to study history are condemned to repeat it. So there's no obligation for us to make the same mistakes that have already been made by others. And that was Thucydides big idea. He was writing down this history in the hope that people in the aftermath would read it and say: I don't have to make that mistake ever again. Well, here we have lots of history that we can learn from. We can learn from all 16 cases, the 12 cases of failure and the 4 cases of success. and then I try in the book to draw some lessons from those that we could apply.

So two very interesting cases to think about are the Brits – the British as they dealt with the Americans when we were emerging at the beginning of the 20th century of what we were supremely confident was going to be an American century. And the British found it very uncomfortable, because they had been the dominant power in the region for a whole century.

But little by little, they noticed that the U.S. is bigger, stronger, and is insistent on being more assertive. So the British started by being clear, which ones of our interests are vital and which ones are only vested or even vivid. They seem important to us, but they're really not that important.

And so, when Teddy Roosevelt threatened war with Britain, which was trying to settle a territorial dispute in Venezuela, the British looked at it and said: You know, Venezuela's not really that important to us. And being the determinate of who – well, we can adjust to that. But Canada, which is our colony and a crucial part of the empire, which the U.S. could seize if it decided to go and attack it, that's vital for us. So we're going to find a way to adapt and adjust, accommodating in some areas and resisting in some areas. And they did it so artfully that by the end of the story Americans were coming to see our interests as essentially aligned with Britain's. And so when World War I occurred in 1914, the U.S. didn't enter the war until 1917, but we immediately became the supply line for Britain – a vital supply line, without which they could not have sustained the war. And also, the source of credit for Britain, without which they couldn't.

And then, when we entered the war, we entered as their ally, and was crucial in terms of the victory. And then in the interim years, between World War I and World War II, the relationship became even thicker. So when World War II came, again, we were the crucial ally to Britain. So I'd say there are a lot of lessons there in artful accommodation in areas where you can accommodate. So that's on the one hand. On the other hand, another great case of success was the Cold War, which you and I remember vividly. So the Cold War strategy was breathtakingly brilliant – breathtakingly brilliant, and it involved so much imagination because, unfortunately, we came along after the fact and worked within this framework. We've – I don't think we've been – you know, we've appreciated how bold this was.

In 1947, George Marshall, who was secretary of state, came to Harvard, just 60 years ago and we just celebrated this in June, to give a speech. And in his speech he said: I have a big idea. This is a year after – a year and a half after World War II. America is exhausted, OK? Has made this huge effort. And he says: I have a big idea. We should take 1 ½ percent of U.S. GDP per year for the next four years and send it to Europe to help rebuild Europe, which has been devastated by war, including helping rebuild Germany and Italy, whose guys were just killing us a year and a half ago. I mean, who could imagine such an idea? It was really a brilliant, brilliant, bold idea.

Now, it was not received with great enthusiasm upon great hearing. But Truman and Acheson and Vandenberg, the Republican senator and leader of the Senator Foreign Relations Committee, and others worked together. And this became one of the pillars in a Cold War strategy. And the Cold War strategy was a competition with the Soviet Union in every form and on all dimension, except bombs and bullets. So not large forces killing each other, which is why it, in my study, counts as one of the no-war cases, even though it's metaphorically called "Cold War." So it was war without real war, OK? And that strategy we followed to contain the Soviet expansion, to deter it's attacks or its threats to things that were vital to us, but at the same to undermine it, or at least to help undermine it, because we understood that their system, we believed, was inherent – contained inherent contradictions.

So basically, that strategy, the U.S. followed for four decades. And ultimately the Soviet Union collapsed. So I would say from that we can also learn some very interesting examples. Now, as we think about China can their retro, authoritarian, party-led government and system out-perform a freedom-based system over the long run? Well, that's a big contest, I would say, and will in part depend on how our system performs and it'll in part depend on how their system performs. But I would say I wouldn't give up on our set of presumptions certainly yet.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Would you say that how we manage our relationship with Russia is, in some ways, really a part of the strategy to manage China? Because in the end – and I don't know – I think China poses more of a threat than Russia does. But it seems to me that Russia – how we get along with Putin and Russia fits into the larger problem, if you will, or challenge of managing the relationship with China.

MR. ALLISON: Absolutely. Absolutely. So both Putin and Russia are a second challenge at the same time. But everything's connected to everything else, and pretty tightly. So again, in the dominant American story China and Russia cannot get along. The bromance between Putin and Xi, if you read most newspaper stories, will say, you know, is only very thin because given that Russia is a weaker country and China is a rising country, and that half of Russia is empty, except – of people – but with a lot of resources, and China shares a long border and has a lot of people and is a demander for resources, this relationship cannot work. OK, that's the line, I think, if you would read most American stories.

I think this is mistaken in the short run, at least, for as far as, you know, the next decade or two. The relationship between Xi and Putin is very thick, very tight. They are, I would say, best buddies, actually. The first country – first leader that Xi Jinping went to visit when he became president was Trump – I'm sorry – was Putin. Just before the G-20 meeting three weeks ago, where did Xi go before he went to Hamburg? To Moscow. And they coordinate their behavior. So when they get together, they both talk about the Americans who are threats to them and who want to undermine their regimes, because they both are running authoritarian regimes, OK?

So I would say they become a problem for us, you know, jointly. They're actually conducting military exercises together now. So they're – the two countries are aligned and the problem for both of them is us. Now, in the long run, is this a relationship that will be sustained, like, in 20 or 30 years? I don't believe so. But the short run, the next – as far as we can see – a very important. Now, from our point of view, if we're trying to manage the rise of China, or to try to cope with the rise of power, the more strong nations that are collaborating with us the better, because the stronger our coalition the more the Chinese have to adapt to the correlation of forces they see.

So it would be much better to have Putin – to have space between Putin and Xi for trying to help us deal with the rise of China. But I think actually Xi has moved more successfully in his dealings with Putin. Plus, Putin's relationship with the U.S., especially after Ukraine, and it soured so with Obama, and now caught up in Russiagate, I suspect Xi thinks the relationship with Putin is pretty tight.

MR. SCHIEFFER: Graham Allison, it is not hard to figure out why your class at the Kennedy School is one of the most popular classes. And I understand people line up to get into that class. Wonderful to talk to you and thank you so much.

MR. ALLISON: Thank you so much for having me.

MR. SCHIEFFER: This is Bob Schieffer. We'll see you next time.

(Music plays.)

(END)