

I would love, Pippa, on this Sunday afternoon for you to tell me that Joe Biden won legitimately the presidency of your country in the year 2020. Yes or no? What I'm saying is that now the question of legitimacy is being contested. Are you offering alternative facts to the actual election results? It is not alternative facts.

So, Pippa, I'll take it as a no then. You don't believe that President Biden was a legitimate president of your country for four years? I think the thing is the legitimacy question is on the table, and we can dismiss it. No, it's not.

Who put it there? Every Sunday we're going to take the temperature of U.S. politics bringing together two experts from either side of the political divide. We'll be discussing the stories that are making waves across the Atlantic. Today I'm joined by Dr. Pippa Malmgren, who's an economist and former special assistant to George W. Bush.

Also, Bob Weiner is democratic strategist and former White House Director of Public Affairs for the Bush and Clinton administrations. You're welcome both, and thanks for being here today. It's a pleasure.

Thank you so much for having us. Not at all. Okay, one of the most striking moments in American politics this week were the claims made by Donald Trump in a primetime TV address that China had meddled in the 2020 U.S. election results, and that there remains enormous vulnerability in the U.S. electoral system.

So, critics have accused the president of using the claims to undermine confidence in American democracy ahead of the midterms in November. Also this week, Trump's nominee to serve as Director of National Intelligence won Jay Clayton, came under scrutiny after refusing to answer the question of who won the 2020 election during the confirmation hearing. Here's a clip of that exchange.

Who won the 2020 election? You know, I'm not going to do this with you. This is a job interview. We've established that you have an obligation to be honest and forthright with the committee.

Yes, you do have an obligation to be honest and forthright with the committee. Who won the 2020 election? Like I said, I'm not going to get into that with you. But you do have an obligation to be honest and forthright with the committee.

Is anything that I just said not honest or forthright? Yes, you're not being honest or forthright. Who won the 2020 election? I think I answered the question. We can keep doing this.

Extraordinary exchange. Well worth watching it back in its entirety. Pippa, were you shocked to see that and hear about that during the week? Or did you feel it's typical of the world we live in now? I think it is typical of the world that we live in now.

And living in the U.S., what I find is there are these quiet conversations happening everywhere, where people are deeply uncertain about almost everything. And so it's no longer a question of what is factually correct. People are uneasy about everything that's presented as a fact.

And also quite locked down into their positions. So non-persuadable. So both disbelieving and non-persuadable.

Which makes politics a very difficult space to navigate these days. But couldn't he have, Jay Clayton have just said, George, quite simply, that Joe Biden won the election. And that's the end of it.

Well, no, because we're in a moment in history where you have the President of the United States presenting various forms of evidence that the election was not held fair and square. And again, we can just dismiss that. But the reality is that the discussion across the United States is heavily about whether this is true or not and whether this is to be adjusted or not.

Bob, I mean, come in here, please, and talk to us about this and respond to what you've been hearing. Well, first of all, Ryan, welcome to the fray. You with your great sports background in Ireland.

I'm wearing my USA Masters track and field tie because I'm at the U.S. National Masters Track Championships here. Our team is in second place right now, and I won a gold medal yesterday. So I wanted to just thank you for your broadness and welcome to Times Radio's forums.

I love you guys. Let me just address what Pippa just said. And Pippa, I worked for W. I got a thank you note from both W and Clinton.

I think I'm the only guy that has a flip side of my thank you notes on two sides of a letterhead. So to say it's typical of the world we live in, it's uncertain, and there's no evidence. Actually, the polls show that by 20 to 40 points, Trump is on the wrong side of this, and people do want the evidence.

He has lost every midterm reelection that has happened so far. By 11 to 13 points, there's been a flip. That's not none.

That's not some. That's every race that has been held, even the ones that were lost in hopeless situations. And he lost his home district of Mar-a-Lago even.

So what you're saying is incorrect. The people are ready for a massive change, a wave, and only because of cheating already, the gerrymandering. And that is a challenge, the cheating that he's doing and the threats to setting the ice and National Guard troops.

But the state secretaries are ready. We have an avalanche of lawyers that are ready. And the state courts have backed up, and already, as you know, 60 courts have supported, and very few.

I think one allowed five feet closer poll watchers. That was the only thing he won. Every court has supported facts.

And so to say that we are in an evidence-free situation, no. Actually, the Democrats have been putting forth fact after fact after fact, and that it's uncertain. No.

What's certain is that you guys are wrong. And what's certain is that this typical of the world? No. The entire world is laughing at Trump and wants a restoration to normalcy.

Pippa, are you living in a fantasy world? It may be that the United States is living in a fantasy world right now. But I think this is so interesting. I've been following Trump and arguing that he would win since 2015.

And I remember these same arguments were put forward that everyone has already decided, and therefore he can't possibly win or sway public opinion. And yet, he's still in power 10 years later. And so there's something being underestimated here.

And I wonder whether part of this is about distinguishing between the man and the machine. And a lot of Americans may not like the man, and they may not like the way he delivers his content. But they do prefer the machine and the asking of the questions.

And I understand you want to do a debate, but this idea that the facts are already decided is simply not the way the American public are responding to the situation. Well, let's say this. First of all, in your statement, you said he's in power 10 years later.

I think you forgot. And I think you, Republican, just a few forget that actually 2020 occurred. So that isn't quite the statement of 10 years later, it's all been the same.

And it's going back, I hate to tell you this, but it's going back. And when Trump goes on TV and says China, China, China, China, he did that, by the way, three, four, five years ago. That isn't a new statement, but he's making news out of it now.

And he forgot that Russia, are you listening and send me the emails? Are you forgetting that Putin said, this is Putin said, I'm doing all I can to help Trump. Those are direct quotes from Trump and from Putin. And the volume two of the Mueller report and Jack Smith's report in terms of the facts that he brought out so brilliantly on Nicole Wallace's show on MSN.

I won't mention alternate network. That's okay. That's okay, Ryan.

But it was fantastic what Jack Smith did. It was so factual. And Trump is trying to shut Jack Smith up and shut Comey up and shut everybody else up that he can on the facts of what's there against him and pretend that he's in a world of where he's the best and everything's the biggest and it's all successful.

Pippa, did Joe Biden legitimately win the 2020 presidential election? Good question. Yes or no? I think that it's being contested now. Can you try? Can you try and give me a yes or no answer, Pippa? Yes.

I'm telling you that you're saying yes. Are you? Yes. It's being contested.

No, no, no, no, no, Pippa. That's not what I'm asking. I'm sorry.

Let's let's not dance on the head of a pin here. Did. No, no, no.

I'm not trying. I'm not trying to be a hero. I just want Pippa.

I would love Pippa on this Sunday afternoon for you to tell me that Joe Biden won legitimately the presidency of your country in the year 2020. Yes or no? Now the question of legitimacy is being contested. Are you offering alternative facts to the actual election results? It is not alternative facts.

It's what's here's the key. Your audience wants to understand why is why is the person saying the facts are clear, not automatically winning everything? Why is there still any question? And so you're. That's what I'm saying.

So you say 60 judges say that Trump shouldn't be president and he should be out. And that's fine. That's a political opinion.

But I'm saying I live in the United States where I am in the midst of conversations. Yeah. You want your listeners to understand how are Americans thinking? And I am saying there is a massive discussion going on across the country.

I'm just I'm just curious, Pippa, that you're. Biden won. You like that.

But that's not what the discussions are. And that's not what it is. Crystal clear on that.

There's no point. If you're right, then there's no point having this debate. Trump is out.

The other side wins. Sometimes people are wrong. But unfortunately, that's not where we are in the public discussion.

Yeah. Okay. So, Pippa, I'll take it as a no, then.

You don't believe that President Biden was a legitimate president of your country for four years. I think the thing is the legitimacy question is on the table. And we can dismiss it.

No, it's not. Who put it there? Well, the president has put it there. Well, there you go.

The question is how much of the public have a concern and a question about it? Okay. Okay. And it comes down to simple things like, you know, how well we can get into all the various issues of.

Sure. No, I appreciate that, Pippa. We can subsidize migration and voting.

The question of legitimacy of voting without evidence. By the way, a recommendation to the world. Sure.

If you really don't like Donald Trump, everyone should just fly to the United States and vote because you don't need to show any ID. Let's move it towards the Democratic Party for a moment and their new campaign, which appears to be masculinity after revelations from the private life of the main Senate candidate Graham Plattner, derail the campaign. The Democrats are scrambling to find a replacement for the oyster farmer turned progressive populist and of the candidates they're searching for.

It seems they're sticking to a Plattner blueprint. That is to say a progressive anti-establishment candidate with an otherwise macho vibe. Bob, are you surprised by this turn

of events? Do you see this as some sort of anti-intellectualism or do you see it as a play for the Republican style vote or do you see this as just local politics in all its glory? The only masculinity is Hexeth and Trump wanting testosterone tests in the military and places like that and coming out with this transgender, everything, you know, blasting transgender.

We don't have a transgender. We have an openness, just like the Republican Party had the Tea Party. We do have the Democratic Social, Democratic keyword, by the way, socialist.

And to me, that's not much different than progressive with people that want child care, cost for health, housing and food, costs and inflation actually on the table as an issue and something done about it instead of taxes for billionaires and fighting wars that take all the money and terrorists that give them all the money to do that. We need something beyond that. That's what Democrats want and we want a wide open tent and we have one, by the way.

No one is saying that they control and it's not masculinity. I saw that in the debate questions that your team sent. Nobody's been saying that.

Only Trump uses that kind of terminology. Pippa, have any thoughts on the masculinity of the Democrats or otherwise? I don't have a great thoughts on that. But I do want to say that, again, the country is waiting for a Democrat platform that people can rally behind.

And they're waiting to hear what will that entail. And unfortunately or fortunately, whichever way you look at it, people do vote with their pocketbooks, so they do care about things like inflation. They do care about being able to meet the cost of living.

And I think it's still an open question between now and when we get to the next election, whether people feel that's going to come more from the left or from the right. I agree with, by the way, the view that this is not actually a left-right fight anymore. This is an establishment versus anti-establishment fight and both sides.

And the Democrats are now going to have to be coming up with an anti-establishment position because, again, that's what it is. It's not a matter of coming up, Brian. Bob.

And if I can just say, I lectured at the London School of Economics a couple of years ago and asked everyone in the room, raise your hands if you think there should be government that's tax breaks for the rich and shrink the government or whether the program should be people programs for the middle and lower and tax breaks for middle and lower, which is the greater way to engine the economy. And every hand in the room went up with the second option. Every single one.

Not one hand went up with what is the Republican platform. The Democratic platform, because they asked me to lecture on the economic impact of the two parties and how things would and could change. The Democratic Party wants the programs like health care and housing and food.

I can't believe that Trump blocked or tried to block unsuccessfully and made a show of it, the housing bill. The same way he did, by the way, with the immigration bill, which he's lost that issue too. But that's what Democrats want.

There's a clear platform and a clear difference and you know it and you don't like it. Can I ask you, Pip, from being fascinated from this part of the world, who you fancy as the next Republican candidate for presidency? Oh, it's not a question of who won fancies. It's an attempt to understand the forces at work.

Yeah. Right now it does look as if Marco Rubio is the likely successor. Yeah.

And again, back to it's perfectly obvious that Democrats are going to win and they have a platform. Okay. Who we don't even know who yet is going to personify the position the Democrats have.

And we have a lot of issues developing around, for example, Governor Gavin Newsom that probably are going to interrupt his ability to be the nominee for the Democrats. So it's an open race on the left in the United States. Bob, Pip has a point about the state of the Democratic Party vis-a-vis getting behind one obvious candidate.

I know we're some time out, but it's always good to have some ducks in a row. What sort of names are you thinking about at this early stage? Well, she just proclaimed Rubio as the nominee. I think Vance has a different view of that.

And I think a lot of other people might too, whether it's Marjorie Greene or any others, I think they will have an open primary. Remember, Nikki Haley made a good show. She got a third of the votes in the last set of Republican primaries.

So that's open. And we are open. And anybody who thinks that you know who's going to be the nominee three years in front or two and a half years in front knows you're always wrong because Reagan was nowhere.

Carter was unheard of. Clinton was unheard of. Nixon, you weren't going to have him to kick around anymore.

Obama, yeah. But what sort of names are kind of popping into your mind at this point? Well, she's right that Newsom and West Borer and, you know, the Tennessee and the Kentucky guys and all the governors and a lot of the senators. I mean, there's like a bench of 12.

The point is that every one of our candidates who have run for office or run in the elections in the last year and a half, they've all won and defeated and upset the Republicans by 12 or 13 points. So there is a real move afoot, but it's way too soon to say who will be the Democratic nominee. I've been saying because you like to babble and sound like you know what you're talking about, that a Newsom Westmore ticket would be terrific.

And we always ask our guests to tell us about the person they think is living the American dream this week. It might be in politics. It might be in any other walk of life.

Pippa, I'll start with you if I may, please. Who's living the American dream this week? So honestly, no one is living the American dream right now. This is the problem in the United States.

I'm sad. With your president? Well, it is. And then the issue also is what is the definition of it.

It definitely used to be that you could own your own home, for example. And today the young don't even expect to ever own their own home. And that doesn't matter whether they're left or they're right.

So this is part of what is driving the confusion in American politics is that the U.S. doesn't have that same vision in the way that it did. And it's ironic because we're in a moment where technological innovation is solving so many problems. But will it solve them fast enough for politics is another question.

So you're saying no one's living the American dream? No one? Here's the key thing. Does anyone feel that they are? I think this is, in politics, emotional responses are critical. And right now, I don't think any of the Democrats are thinking they're totally living the American dream.

And I don't think Republicans think that we're there yet either. Both sides are focused on reform rather than just acceptance of the system. OK.

Well, Bob, I'll come to you in a moment. But Pip, I just I really would love to ask you one last question on the subject, which is, at what point in your adult life did you feel that you came close to living the American dream? So my definition of the American dream isn't about material things, which makes me a little unusual. That's OK.

But in the sense that you have the capacity to become what you're capable of. And I've been lucky in my life to have that opportunity. I've tried to use it as much as I can to create a better environment for everyone to have that same chance.

But not everybody has that. And this is the argument in American politics is how to address those who aren't benefiting from the system that gives some the American dream but not others. OK.

I suppose I should finesse the question. Under, which president do you think the American dream in your adult lifetime was most achievable? So I worked for Ronald Reagan. And that was a very dramatic period in American history where all Americans left and right felt that the U.S. had won the argument between capitalism in the West and communism in the East.

And there was an overwhelming sense that things could be achieved on a scale that wasn't possible before. And I do think that the decades that followed did reflect that. OK.

Thank you for that answer. Bob, who's living the American dream this week? Can I get back? Nobody's living the American dream because they can't afford housing. What the heck happened on that housing bill that was unanimous in the Senate, near unanimous in the House, by Warren to Scott? What on earth could you be doing to make a message out of that because he wants the SAVE Act to steal Americans' votes? Now, in terms of who is the model, I would say Barack and Michelle Obama are really models for who is living the American dream and love and thrive this country.

But I have a personal favorite also in terms of my own life. My contractor, John Green, does so much around my house, teaches me the message of when he sees stuff on immigration on TV, he says that and ICE and all that, he says that's because Trump is trying to send a

message, and he's right. You have to be able to think and listen and watch from the Trump point of view as well.

So I'm very impressed with John Green, my contractor, who teaches me the message of listen to the other side and watch it and see what they are trying to say. In terms of what did you want, the best president, Bill Clinton created 26 million jobs. 26 million, the economy was booming.

I mean, I love FDR. We're all still living through the New Deal. But Bill Clinton really kept things moving and was a hugely successful president.

OK, two fine answers, and from where you're coming from in the world, I appreciate that very much, Pippa. And Bob, we won't go without making reference to another story this week from the United States that, and I'll start with you, Bob, with this one, because Joe Biden announced this week that he would publish a memoir after the November midterm elections. Why do you think he's going to do that? Oh, he's seen so much press from his wife and the opposition Republicans claiming that because of his horrible show at the debate, and I was there at the National Press Club with 200 journalists who all groaned when he went, and he couldn't answer the questions, and he was dead tired from some trips.

But he needs to do that, I think, to show that he still has a vision that has been one that the world respected and loved, and he wants to make sure that there's an aspirational goal for the Democrats, and I think that will help. But he did make a big mistake, Ryan. He made a promise to turn it over to the next generation, and when he didn't, it created a mess in the Democratic Party.

I think we all have to concede that. You're referring to the fact that he took him so long to concede that it was time to step aside? Correct. Okay, I'm just done.

Pip, Joe Biden's writing his memoirs. Your thoughts? The question will be, is Joe Biden writing them or is someone else writing them? I think that's a fair question, yeah. Look, it's going to be about every method is going to be used on both sides to try to win over public opinion.

I think what's really important from this discussion we've had this morning is that it's clearly incredibly difficult to have a measured, calm discussion. As my interlocutor here is showing, everything you say is treated in a denigrated way. It's almost impossible to have a calm conversation, and so everyone retreats into their respective camps and the ability to have a cross-dialogic discussion – see, there you go, it's just literally – if I say it looks like Marco Rubio is the logical nominee, it comes out as I am proclaiming that this is already true.

So I think the Times owes it to their listenership to try to have people that are capable of having a calm, rational discussion that is not all about haranguing. But likely that's what we're going to see in this presidential race. It makes for good drama, but not for good civic understanding.

I appreciate that, but it could be argued that President Trump wouldn't be a leading light in the civil discourse world. That's why I say separating the man from the machine is very important, and many, many voters in America do not like Trump, but they will vote for him,



and we have to understand the reasons why. You sound so grounded and so on-Trumpy that I was really surprised that you couldn't admit that Joe Biden won the presidential election in 2020.

I'm really surprised by that. That's what I'm saying. It's not a question of admitting.

It is, though. But you can't admit it, which I think is extraordinary. No, but what I'm saying is we're in the middle of a massive fight in the United States over which – No, I know.

I get all that. Listen, I'm not stupid. I read the papers, but I'm just surprised that you couldn't give that a straight answer, given how measured you are as a person.

But I am giving you the straight answer as the word legitimate is now seriously in question. Yeah. And look, I was there during the Trump period when we had to count the hanging chads.

Yes, I remember them well. And also, we had this big question of, was it legitimate? And many people still feel it was not. Yes, but Al Gore called President George W. Bush and conceded that he had won.

And he said that gives it a legitimacy that you're not going to give Joe Biden's presidency. That's the difference. That's correct.

Different times. And that is the difference. And that's why I'm saying the word legitimate hasn't been – let's call it ratified by the political event that you're describing.

And I'm just acknowledging that is the case. Well, look, I know that you might not have agreed on everything, but I've enjoyed your company. It trashed out a few things.

And we'll do it again another time, I hope. Dr. Pippa Malgram, economist and former Special Assistant to George W. Bush. Thank you, Bob Weiner.

Thank you also, former White House Director of Public Affairs for both the Bush and Clinton administrations. Appreciate your time this Sunday afternoon, where we are, and Sunday morning, where you are.