

VIDEO OF RICH HIGGINS and GINNI THOMAS

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[BEGIN FILE]

RICH HIGGINS:

The people who put their faith in Trump – I mean, I can speak for myself, the people who put their faith in Trump put it in him because he is a fighter, okay? And the thing about the nature of his election is in taking on the establishment Republicans, the establishment Dems, the Washington political power class -- which is what he's now up against. Every, you know, you don't get to decide how long or how hard the fight's going to be. No soldier who jumps out of an airplane and onto a battlefield know when the fight's over. And I think you have to go into this fight recognizing that it's a fight.

Steve Bannon at CPAC, back last year gave a talk with Reince Priebus and in it he said, you thought they were going to give you your country back without a fight, you're sadly mistaken. And I think we need to recognize that we're in a fight, we don't know how long it's going to take, it isn't going to be easy. You don't get to hit it on Google and get the answer and you're going to have to actually do some work. Now, soldier up. I mean, that's what I would tell the people who are, you know, if they claim to be Trump supporters, we're going to have losses. You know, my colleagues and I who are working on the jihadi issue, yeah, sure, we all got purged under General McMaster. But the reality is, all of us are still in the fight and we're not going to quit. And the country deserves that.

Things like "build the wall" are good slogans. Because I think it reached a large number of people with something as complex as the sovereignty of a nation. You know, you can't go around explaining sovereignty and, you know, how global cultural migration – you don't want to get into that. It's a simple thing that Americans can understand and it's something that I think I'm hoping people who are curious about this will go and they'll dig a little bit deeper.

"Lock her up" in terms of a slogan is, you know, it's fun, right? So, there's an energy that the crowd gets from doing it, you know, picking on your opponent, etcetera. But in order to take these difficult political concepts like *rule of law*, right, you know, and *equal protection under the law*, and boil that down to something that a campaign can use that everybody can say that fits on a bumper sticker, I mean, it's a really important part of any movement.

And I think we need to recognize that the movement – and I think this is what Steve Bannon is beginning to work on and others who have left the administration, maybe prematurely, but in fact I don't think that we've really left the administration. I think the recognition is that the fight remains outside, you know?

And until you get Congress back and representing its people, we have to fight from there. The President can serve as maybe a cheerleader. He can serve as a leader over institutional things. And, he's already begun to do some stuff. But he really needs, and people need to recognise that power in this town flows from Congress. And it's up to the American people to actually bring that back into place.

A campaign is – a campaign is not a good reflection of the reality if you're actually trying to manage the institutions of government. It's just not real. It's not real. And so where, you know, where you have right now – so you have the old adage, your team is as strong as your weakest link, and right now, we have a lot of weak links.

And the President, I think, you know, personally, I'm glad to see him at least attempting to make an effort at bipartisanship. Whether or not that will succeed, I don't know. But the reality is, you know, Ronald Reagan didn't get anything he wanted to get done without Tip O'Neill. And, you know, who is going to be President Trump's Tip O'Neill? I don't know the answer to that question, but the fact that the President seems to be looking for answers, I'm not going to belittle him or besmirch him for that.

In terms of specific policy issues, I remain concerned that – and where I see this happening especially is on the radical Islam issue and I see it happening a little bit less along the economy, you know, on the economy issue. We continue to allow this, you know, the perpetuation of this mythology as it comes to the formulation of security strategy policy

regarding this issue. And I, for the life of me, cannot understand why we cannot just get to reality-based decision making when it comes to this problem.

My personal opinion is that there are a lot of external influences -- whether that be oil wealth from the Middle East, our own ideologically incapable folks who, you know, because they exist in the post-modernist multiculturalist worldview, they can't believe that an enemy really would fight you and believe he has to kill you because of his religion. Look, I'm not some conspiracy theorist, I'm a fact-based guy. My biggest concern is that the McCarthyists on the left -- and some on the right, have begun, you know, they've purged people who simply want to introduce facts into the discussion.

GINNI THOMAS:

When McMaster went on "Meet the Press" with Chuck Todd in August, when he was asked about your firing, what he said was, he made it sound like the memo you seemed to get fired about represented "a narrow agenda" that wouldn't help the president and wouldn't serve the nation. And when Chuck Todd asked about it, he made it sound like having read it that he was glad that somebody like this was fired. Tell us what happened and what you were trying to convey, and what you would say to McMaster today.

RICH HIGGINS:

What I worry about is where General McMaster says, I'm "narrow-minded," my voice, my opinion, my facts, my studies, my twenty years of experience of working with this problem is now not at the discussion table. And the reason that it's not at the discussion table is because it's fact-based, not opinions and not sold to us under some rubric that, oh, you know, the feel-goodisms that people want to hear.

We need to take a hard line national security perspective at things. And that's not to be narrow-minded. That's to be fact-based. So if fact-based means narrow-minded, then, yes, I'm narrow-minded. But I'm going to operate in reality and I think that, you know, when you work in something as serious as national security you're required to do so.

After I was let go on the 21st [July 2017], and about a week and a half later, Ezra Cohen, who was the senior director for INTEL at the National Security Council was let go. At the same time, the *Atlantic* had been calling me for about a week trying to run a story. And, you know, I basically had no comment. No comment, no comment. Well, that day -- or it may have been the night before, I got a phone call from the author of the article saying, hey, I'm going to publish the article. Yeah, okay. Well, that Wednesday comes and Ezra Cohen gets dragged into General McMaster's office and basically told he's leaving. And he leaves the building about 1:30 in the afternoon. Well, interestingly, the *Atlantic* article drops at about 1:30 that afternoon.

By five pm that afternoon it had seven million Twitter impressions. And a friend of mine who tracks media and media exposure on Twitter said that by midnight that night it had bloomed out to sixty-five million Twitter impressions.

So what that tells me is that the American public is deeply concerned about what's going on, as they should be, but I think at the same time we need to remember, this is going to be a long fight. All of us inside know that. And I think, you know, keep the faith and stay focused on the long-term objective, recognize that we're going to have some short-term losses.

I'm still waiting for Chuck Todd to give me a phone call. You know, I think I should get some equal exposure to General McMaster if he's going to invoke my name and my work on the show. The mainstream media doesn't want to discuss this because I believe the mainstream media is almost ninety to ninety-five percent complicit in, particularly, the Russia hacked the election nonsense. Which is just, to me, it's unforgivable. It's a complete deception against the American public. And, you know, it's the total corruption of the fifth estate.

I'm seen as somebody who takes a hard line on radical Islam, who understands the Islamic threat doctrine, and that that memo gave them cause to remove me or at least some sort of cause to remove me, but it was really always about the terrorism issue.

I guess the greatest concern I have continues to be our response to the Islamic movement, which is what they call it -- the Islamic movement -- reflects an organizational *system of systems* mindset. And we have all these concocted terms we come up with to explain these groups, right? And I think if you look at any, you know, Rand just did some studies on this, I mean, you know, explosive -- exponential almost growth in terrorist organizations and individuals aligned

with the movement is just unbelievable. Particularly since 2010 in the Obama administration's failed policy regarding the Arab Spring. But we still don't have experts inside the system.

I guess the simplest way to explain it to your audience would be we're now sixteen years post 9-11. Sixteen years after the start of the Cold War, we had thousands and thousands of experts on communism, socialism, Marxism, Sovietology, thousands and thousands of linguists, and they weren't all former Russians. They were Americans who were trained on these doctrines and trained in the languages and they were white guys and girls and nobody said anything about it.

Today we are excluded from understanding this stuff. And I think it's some sort of, you know, a sick self-hatred that's set in upon us. The number of experts that we have inside this system is – I can count it on my hands. I mean, it's that small. And what concerns me is, as we go forward, I don't see any priority, you know, any priority being given right now, whether you're talking about the Defense Department or the intelligence community, at fixing this shortfall. And that is something that we're going to need. If we're in this, you know, we're going to be fighting these guys for a long time. Well, we're going to need a cadre that's capable of it. We do not have it today, not at all.

GINNI THOMAS:

The seven-page memo that you wrote, Rich, was stunning, was masterful, and I just think people may not read it or they may not understand what they're reading. What did you hope to convey now that it's out in the public sphere to President Trump and his team?

RICH HIGGINS:

Well, I think the first thing people need to know about the memo is that it was written in a personal capacity. It wasn't something I was working on at the White House. It was something I was working on outside the White House with people I had been affiliated with during the course of the campaign. And the genesis of the memo was, you know, in observing what was happening to the President where you couldn't turn on your Twitter feed, Facebook, any mainstream media without hearing this consistent deluge of "Russia hacked the election," "Russia did this," "Russia did that."

I mean, just complete and utter barrage of information, trying to get people to accept the fact that the President was illegitimate, that he was really working for Putin, you know, and all this other nonsense. And what we wanted to do was lay out how that narrative was being enforced by the mainstream media and why the various power centers of government and of corporations, etcetera, may be allowing that to happen or at least not speaking up as vocally as one might have expected.

The memo, you know, allegedly it reached the President – I don't know whether that's true or not. If it did, I'm flattered, if it didn't, that's okay, too. The fact of the matter is that it bothers me that, a) when they dismissed me they never gave me cause. They just said, you're out. And only later, you know, about a week later, did I find out why I had even been removed.

I wanted them to understand that what they saw happening to the President was not reflective of politics as usual in Washington. You know, I mean, we need to remember President Trump is a businessman, okay? And I think his perspective is one of a businessman. He's used to being at the top of a pyramid and he, you know, he fights downhill in his organization and in parallel with other organizations. Now he's fighting uphill. You know, going back to Omaha Beach, right? We're going into Omaha Beach.

And I wanted to make sure they understood that the nature of the President's election informed the reaction to his assumption of power -- and what that reaction looked like and how it manifested. So by explaining the operating environment that he was coming into, which was informed by these cultural Marxist memes and how those cultural Marxist memes could be deployed in the form of "Russia hacked the election," etcetera, in order to subvert, delegitimize, etcetera. I was trying to convey to people in the campaign the seriousness of the situation because it was not, you know, something that, I mean, I've never seen anything like it before. Maybe somebody else has, I never have.

Going forward, I think, you know, my hope is that people will take the time to educate themselves. I don't know everything about this stuff. I'm the first guy to admit that, you know, I have some knowledge, but I don't know everything. And people who are interested in this can go – they can read about the Frankfurt School and they can

understand Marcuse and they can understand how Antifa – I mean, it’s amazing to me. You can go back and look at history. Antifa is, you know, is operating inside Germany in the 1930s and the Nazis actually rise in opposition to Antifa. And you see Antifa here on the streets today. And you say to yourself, can you go back and just study the history, people have to do their homework on this. And I think if we can – if we can at least incite some curiosity in some young people to take the time to learn this stuff, the country and the nation will be better off for it.

GINNI THOMAS:

Shocking to many of us was when Steve Bannon gave the “60 Minutes” interview that said within forty-eight hours there was a strategic decision that they would allow the establishment to play a big part in personnel. And that dispelled all the transition work that had gone on up until the election. As someone who got in after really struggling to get in, after working in the campaign, Rich, who’s winning in the war on the swamp? Is the swamp winning? Is Donald Trump winning? Where’s the battle and how important was that early decision?

RICH HIGGINS:

Well, I think Steve coined it, right, he said” the original sin” of the administration, right? I think, you know, the President came – the President-elect at the time, came down to Washington, he had a meeting here at the RNC and some deals were made there in order to help form up a government that, you know. Whether it was idealism – I mean, you know, I’m not going to assess what drove that decision making. Steve made it sound like it was a pretty pragmatic decision in his interview on “60 Minutes”.

I think guys who’d been battling the swamp for years on specific policy issues, we recognized and a lot of us were saying to one another, they don’t understand. We are going into Omaha Beach. You know, and we were putting it out there, people saying, look, you know, on November 9th, we boarded the LSTs and we are going into Omaha Beach. And on January 20th, we’re going to hit the shore. And what we saw happen, I mean, literally within days, even during the transition, we were taking fire and guys who had been with the President all along, throughout the campaign, were getting taken out. You know, whether it be, you know, Steve being the latest to leave, but, you know, early on, you know, Monica Crowley, General Flynn, and several others.

So I think what we’re looking at right now is a long term campaign has to be conducted if the people – it’s really up to the people, right? I mean, I can tell you my personal opinion. But the American public has to make the decisions to what they want. Do they want a government that represents their interests? Do they want a government that’s reflective of the core American idea? Do they want a government that reflects an economic nationalist perspective that seeks the benefit of all here, that prioritizes citizenship, that recognizes sovereignty, includes borders, and common laws, etcetera? Or do they want this globalist menu? You know, and it’s really up to the people to decide. I mean, that’s – that’s what we want. We want the American people to make that decision. We don’t want it made for them by politicians beholden to interests that aren’t theirs.

So how long will it take? Ginni, I’m thinking it’s going to take fifteen, twenty, twenty-five years. It’s a mindset issue. It’s a concept issue. The American public has to make these decisions, but they need to be informed in order to be making these decisions.

GINNI THOMAS:

But we may be in the process of losing our leader that we thought was going to stomp down on all the pressures that you’ve just described and that your memo talks about. How do you talk to the Trump voter who thought by “building a wall” and other phrases that were promised and campaigned on, what do you say to those people as they watch President Trump not do what he said he was going to do?

RICH HIGGINS:

I think that the American people need to understand that this is a long fight. You know, you can’t take the country back in a couple of months. I mean, we just have to be realistic about that. I don’t believe even if he’s in office for eight years we’ll have completely undone the work that’s been, you know, been accomplished by the other side already.

Strategic patience is necessary with the President. At the same time, I think that the movement itself needs – is in need of some self-reflection. And to understand the core of how President Trump got elected, what do we need to do? Do we need to bring civics education back? Do we need to understand the concepts of sovereignty?

I personally believe that President Trump won the election at the first debate where he wouldn't raise his hand and say he would support the Republican candidate. Do you remember that? And I think that's where he actually won the election, where he separated himself from the two party political system. He didn't carry Wisconsin and Michigan and Pennsylvania through, you know, some sort of partisan political, you know, rhetoric. He carried it because he was speaking to Americans about America. And I think going forward the people who supported Trump need to recognize that we need people in Congress -- Democrats and Republicans, not just Republicans, Democrats and Republicans who are willing to work with him.

GINNI THOMAS:

So help people connect the dots in America. There's so much going on. Whether it's suddenly the emergence of transgender rights, or the downing of statues or ESPN suddenly becoming left wing commentators instead of sports people, or the closing down of free speech on college campuses, or the censorship that's happening by media providers to conservative or pro-American voices. How do you connect dots of what's happening in America so fast to the memo that you wrote in the White House?

RICH HIGGINS:

Well, I mean, it goes – it really goes back to the cultural Marxist concept, right? If you understand that in America, the individual, and the individual is the sovereign. And, you know, if you go back and you read – I always try to explain to folks, the idea of America is in the *Declaration of Independence*. That's the idea. The Constitution is the legal means, right, that we swear to protect, because the nation exists under law, we swear to protect. But we're protecting the idea.

And when you begin to attack our history, all right, when you attack the founders, for example, because the cultural norm at the time included slavery, you know. I had an ancestor that fought on the side of the North in the Civil War, I don't have any issue with, you know, personal guilt about the issue of slavery, right? And this cultural attempt to kind of impart that upon people, you see it in the public school system, you see it in the culture now, it's really – it's a direct attack against those foundational documents and the ideas of those men.

And so when the President, I think, accurately depicts the situation in Charlottesville where ideologues from both the left and the right are channelling people to violent action against one another and he comes in and he calls them both out, he is doing a heroic service and he is pilloried in the media for this. And it is a reflection of the cultural Marxist memes that drive today's national media.

And I think the American public needs to become aware of that. And my personal opinion is that they are aware of it. They may not be able to articulate what they see, in terms of the political warfare or political science rhetoric, etcetera, but they feel it. So trust their instincts and recognize that, you know, the vestige – the vestiges of America today still are, you know, still are as strong as ever.

You see it in baseball, you see it in the home schooling movement, you see it in the people who came out, who hadn't voted in decades in some cases, and voted for President Trump. Who realized we need to move away from these ideologies. The entire form of government that the founders created depends upon reason and critical thinking. Without it, it will not work anymore. And when you see ideologues on both sides, whether you're a white supremacist or hardcore Marxist Antifa guys, we need to push them both out to the margins of society - instead of bringing one side in and delegitimising the other. That's just – that's just very dangerous for the country going forward.

GINNI THOMAS:

In a culture, Rich, that is – patriotism is on the decline culturally, what is the best thing about America to you? What are we fighting for?

RICH HIGGINS:

The thing that concerns me the most, I guess the thing I sense slipping away is that America was so unique in, a) the time of the founding, where we had had literally hundreds of years of colonial self-governance and English common law to frame that. And, you know, when the founding fathers decided, hey, we're going to form a government, they didn't slapdash something together in 1775 up in Boston with the Sons of Liberty. They took thirteen years, you know, and they studied Plato and they studied Rome and they studied ancient history, Greece, and they used all that to actually form a republic where the people, the individual was the sovereign. And the people actually were in charge. And I think that's an ethos that today a lot of our government officials and certainly a lot of our politicians no longer recognize. And I think it's a return to that that the President's campaign represented.

GINNI THOMAS:

And who are the foreign and domestic threats to America?

RICH HIGGINS:

We, today, in the national security community, see threats from a nation-state perspective. We always want to look at foreign powers in terms of their governance structure, their military, their intelligence apparatus, their economies. But America is susceptible to other threats as well. Those threats are ideological in nature, right?

So we have dealt with in the past ideological threats. We fought the Cold War. And while we fixate today on the USSR and their nuclear weapons and their armies, they were never our moral equivalent. And there's a moral dimension to warfare in the ideological space. And it's something that the communists began to recognize and they've infiltrated, you know, in many parts of our society, through these cultural Marxist memes that I wrote about in the memo. And it's understanding that those memes themselves represent a threat to the national security of the United States insofar as they subvert our ideology and our form of governance.

When you're trying to influence a nation to perform acts or conduct behaviors that are inimical to their own interests, you do, you know, influence campaigns, you try and introduce into their society, into their culture memetics, memes, that over time erode one's sense of oneself. And I think it's this return to, you know, who we are.

You know, when I was out on the campaign for President Trump, I would start my speeches, you know, raising money for him or what not, and I always would say our grandfathers were smarter than us. And when I would say that, I think it hit people. And then I'd say it again at the end of the speech and they'd understand what I meant. And what I was simply getting at was to be an American.

You know, I've met people in Iraq, Afghanistan, France, Germany, all over the world, they're Americans. They believe in the American idea. The government that they may be actually sitting in right now may not be America, it may not be anything even close. But we have to reflect upon the fact that we have a responsibility to this idea.

But what these cultural Marxist memes do is they come in and they erode our self-confidence in that idea, our faith in that idea. And when we would do influence operations, you know, societally, we target, you know. When we were targeting a society, we would target four specific areas -- students and youth, labor groups, media and elites. Because we know if you can get control of those organs of power inside of a nation, you can purposefully manipulate their perception of events in, you know, basically to your interests. And we see that going on today.

You know, recently, I've been looking back through old communist archives, back to the House on Un-American Activities Committee, back to the 1920s and the rise of the communist movements in Europe. We see reflected today with groups like Antifa the very same rhetoric that we saw reflected back in the 1920s, then again the 40s and the 50s. I mean, it is unbelievable. And for people who are watching this who are interested, I encourage you to go into the archives and go back and look at the testimony. For example, Bella Dodd and others who just absolutely illuminate the case for this is a very real thing and you see it manifesting itself today.

We need to recognize that these revolutionary ideologies work together because they share a common enemy. They don't necessarily share a common end state, all right? In some cases, they do. In some cases, they don't. A couple of key things to remember, Sayyid Qutb, all right, who is the ideological founder, if you will, of al-Qaeda, his first book is actually called *Social Justice in Islam* and it's how, you know, Marxist socialist worldviews align with Islam.

Another book that was written in 2003 by Ilyich Sanchez Ramirez, also known as The Jackal -- I think it's Ilyich Sanchez, was *Revolutionary Islam*. It's in French. It's *Islam Revolutionnaire*. But it's *Revolutionary Islam*. In it, he

talks about how the Islamic movement can work with leftist and Marxist groups in the West in furtherance of their overall objectives.

And you see that taking place in Charlottesville, you know, a few weeks ago where you have the small, you know, couple hundred right wing extremist lunatics. You have a large mass, I don't know the exact number, of Antifa folks there who are all talking about taking down Confederate statues. And then you have CAIR, Hamas, coming up and saying, yeah, we need to tear down all those statues.

You know, it's in this battle of information and synchronising people to action under the rubric of political warfare that these groups actually coalesce against that core American idea that we spoke about earlier.

GINNI THOMAS:

Have you ever done politics before or what is your background or highest and best use?

RICH HIGGINS:

I'm an Army veteran. I spent many years working in the counter-terrorism community both with the Department of Justice, Department of Defense, supporting the intelligence community in myriad projects. But they were mainly focused on tactical capability development things.

During the course of my professional career with the Pentagon, I went to the National War College. Degree and masters – a masters degree in strategic studies there. I think that, you know, I am not a political animal whatsoever. I recognized the threat that a possible Clinton administration would represent to the American, you know, the American nation. And only became involved in politics because I personally believe – and I think this is true, that President Trump is himself not an ideologue.

You know, he doesn't fit in the Democrat or Republican mold. And when we constantly try and cast him in one of those two binaries, it doesn't work.

I'm kind of like that. You know, on social issues, I'm probably more liberal than most people. On economic and foreign policy issues, I'm a lot more conservative than most people. And I think that's what it means to be an American. You know, you're – I'm that five percent in the middle that gets to actually, you know, use my freedom to decide which path we want to go down. I'm not hide-bound onto some ideology.

In my professional career, I was always somebody who wanted to move into the spaces that were innovative, right, pushing out on the edge. And I think that President Trump represents an innovative form of political calculus that this country hasn't really seen before. You would call it, you know, counter-revolutionary almost in its nature, where he's trying to return America to its former self. You know, "make America great again."

And it's understanding the underlying political concepts that drive the President's campaign and, frankly, his election and how we actually bring those into policy that is where, you know, it's the reason I agreed to go back into government in the first place.

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