

***A Conversation with Pete Buttigieg
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Derek Chollet:

Mayor, I'd like to start by asking you to reflect on the underlying conditions that has led to what I believe is one of those perilous moments we faced in American history with what's going on today in the United States. And, and I'd be really curious to hear from you of what you think has led to this moment and in shaping our response to this pandemic and, unrest. You spent eight years as a mayor of an industrial Midwest city. You spent well over a year traveling this country to every corner and meeting all sorts of people and taking the pulse of what's going on. So how do you explain this? How did we get here?

Pete Buttigieg:

Thank you, Derek, for guiding our conversation and I want to thank the German Marshall fund for the opportunity to be with you. As you say, this is coming at an exceptionally difficult moment in the life of the United States. And I think ultimately what we're facing here is the most disruptive and harmful force throughout American history, once again, being confronted and being confronted in a new way. There have been a lot of efforts to, I think, grasp for the right analogies ... I don't think there really is an appropriate historical parallel that they can instruct us. At least not in a tidy way. We are where we are because America to this day has failed to come to terms with its greatest demon, which is systemic racism.

And if you just think about it, this is always the force-- and white supremacy its related cousin-- that has come nearest to fully wrecking the American project at the time of the founding. It was the force that made it most difficult to obtain consensus and led to some contortions in terms of the compromises that were required to set up the American government that are haunting us now, in things like the counter-majority area structure of the United States Senate, it almost sank the United States. Of course, in the Civil War, the greatest threats to the integrity of the country in our history. And I think once again, we're at a moment where we will either make major progress in confronting systemic racism in my lifetime; or it will fully destroy the American projects in my lifetime. That's what's in front of us.

And so when folks ask what's different this time: it's just the cumulative effect of not only police violence and mistreatment of black Americans in particular and Americans of color in general in encounters with the criminal legal system, but it goes so much deeper than that. COVID-19 has both exposed and exploited the many ways in which, there is a physical measurable health impact to racism that is always to the detriment of Americans of color. The economic disempowerment of black Americans in particular cannot be separated, nor can educational inequities, housing inequities, or the political inequities that we've seen-- maybe not codified as they were in the days of Jim Crow, but very much on display the patterns of voter suppression that have been taking place in recent years. And by the way, not only with the largely in the American South, I think the biggest thing that will have to change if we're actually going to get out of this is a change among white Americans.

Part of white supremacy is a, a sort of a fiction, or a perception, or a sense that race is an issue that applies to people of color. In other words, because whiteness is treated as the default or the norm, white people generally don't have to think of themselves as having a race, even though whiteness defines and affects the experience of being a white American in just as many ways, but with a totally different effect, as being black or a person of color affects the lives of others. And so right now, I think there's a very challenging balance for people of good intent in the United States, recognizing that black voices are-- and ought to be—leading this protest and this movement, and this moment in so many ways. And yet recognizing that they cannot be asked to lead or bear this burden alone when what really has to change the most, not only politically, but really socially is what is going on in the hearts and minds and practices of white people and white-oriented structures in our country.

All of this was coming to a head in a way that really almost defies description. The metaphor of original sin is appropriate, but already feels a little bit shopworn and maybe a little dangerous to these. It makes it feel like the sentence from a distant past. There are other ways that it's been described, but we are really in a new place. And of course we're in a new place in terms of, not only the lack of leadership competence to unite Americans at a time like this, but actually it's very opposite, opposite. A president who does not even attempt as general Mattis pointed out last night, does not even pretend to attempt to unify her that is incredibly dangerous. And yet is also, I think, begin to lead to a reaction in American civil society, even in traditionally conservative corners.

If you think about the extraordinary nature of their generals rebuke, if you think about the fact that the church, not just the Episcopal church that I belong to, but the Catholic Bishop of Washington works very vocal in the way that religion was being instrumentalized in a divisive way by this president that, uh, what remain of the antibodies in American life to the kind of divisiveness the president and his offering seem to be activated. But that's the situation that we're in and it's painful. And it, it makes it that much harder for us to explain ourselves on the world stage, which is one reason why I think this conversation is important and I've been looking forward to it.

Derek Chollet (09:35):

Absolutely. And we definitely want to get into America on the world stage, but before I do, during your campaign, you talked about the importance of trying to build a new kind of politics and to move beyond traditional dividing lines between right, and left conservative and liberal. And you've spoken quite eloquently just this morning now about the importance of transformational change. Uh, so I'd like to push you a little further, what sort of transformational change do you think is necessary, and how would you do it? We're so polarized, Washington has been so dysfunctional over the last, not just last three years, but arguably the last decade. How do you get it done when you have an opposition that seems pretty unwilling to talk about some of the change that you've suggested.

Pete Buttigieg (10:33):

Well the reality is it's part of why we need to change and improve the terms of our democracy itself. Democracy reform in the United States is one of those topics that has always been seen as important and rarely seen as urgent. And so it always, at the end of the day, takes a bit of a back seat to a sexier or seemingly more critical issue. And yet, we look at the fact that, first of all, that this president of was not the preferred choice of a majority of voters in the last election. You look at the fact that money has come to play the role that it does in politics. You look at the persistence of often racially motivated voter suppression, and just the very terms of how we, it's the issue of how we deal with all our issues. And I

will say that I speak out of a very forward-leaning position on this during the campaign, even talking about how we might want to reform or need to reform the structure of the Supreme court so that it doesn't become another political battlefield.

And I found audiences were ready to hear it. You know abolishing the electoral college is not the easiest sell in a place like new answer. Talking about Supreme court reform gets people a little nervous on all sides of the aisle, but, we've come to a point where I think there's a widespread recognition that if we want to call ourselves a democracy, if we want live into America's reputation at our best moments as a country that is speaking for democracy in the world stage, and we've got to get our house in order. And so I think that underlies all of the other concrete reforms that need to happen.

The kinds of things we articulated in what my campaign called the Frederick Douglas plan on systemic racism, acknowledging that economic empowerment, criminal legal system reform, health, education, housing, and democracy... are all interconnected. And each of them needs major steps in order to really be the kind of country that we need to be. But any policy change we seek to make, any policy equipment we're going to need in order to confront issues like climate change begin with simply making sure that we have a more responsive system to demands that are already widely understood among people, regardless of how they've been voting in the last few elections.

Derek Chollet (12:48):

Do you think, though, the opposition is ready for this kind of dialogue? From your campaign and the experience you've had over the last 15 months, or from your efforts in trying to bring change to South Bend, what gives you hope that this is possible?

Pete Buttigieg (13:10):

Part of my kind of specialty in the campaign was, was reaching out in, in some of the counties, especially in Iowa that had famously voted for Barack Obama and then voted for Donald Trump. And what I found there was that the appealing to people was not necessarily a matter of slicing and dicing the ideological weighted average and hitting mid-point. It was a matter of speaking to people with a level of regard that showed an understanding that politics is fundamentally about everyday life. The biggest themes that we're addressing from freedom, security, from systemic racism to economic justice, to healthcare, they ultimately matter because they catch out in somebody's everyday life.

And so often people would come up to me at my events, letting me know that they had been lifelong Republicans or even that they voted for this president. And in their mind, in their view, it was often as less about an affinity for what he had to say it more about a desire to kind of burn the house down. And my message was: alright, the house is on fire now, what are we going to do next? And there was a way to reach people that again, did not ever involve watering down my values or policies, but really it was just about making sure that we found the humanity in one another. I remember one moment when I was in a rural area of Iowa-- and I always thought was important to have a Q and A, and not just getting stump speech, no matter how big the crowd. I called on a guy, and it was in the split second after I called him and before he started speaking that I made out the lettering on his baseball cap that said Trump. And I thought, well, alright, here we go.

He had a question about social security and he a curious, open minded, curious and worried about whether the economy was really going to work for his community. And later on I learned that a

supporter of ours had befriended him. I still don't know if I won him over... but there were stories like that throughout the campaign. Whenever I spoke about trying to unite what I call "future former Republicans" to progressives and independents, there were always people nodding in the crowd. And what that told me is this isn't just about ideology for people. Again, it's not that I've tricked anybody to think I was any less progressive than I am. It was about reaching people in a way that, that, that showed regard for where they are and took politics back to the realm of everyday life, which is ultimately what it's about. Even with the most high-minded themes that we'd like to discuss.

Derek Chollet (15:40):

Well, I'd like to shift now to America's role in the world. And for the next few weeks at this Brussels Forum, we'll be hearing from European friends about what impact this crisis-- both twin crises, the coronavirus crisis, as well as the domestic unrest, and the response to it-- is bringing, is damaging America's role in the world are impacting it. And I'm curious to hear your take on how you see this going and how we should be thinking about foreign policy right now. I mean, we are overwhelmed here at home with lots to be worried about. And it's forced certainly in our media environment, what's happening in the world being pushed further away. So how do you think we should be thinking about foreign policy and also what message do you, are you worried that we're sending to the world right now?

Pete Buttigieg (16:39):

Well, first of all, of course it is troubling that a country whose leadership I think is needed, especially to vindicate democracy and human rights at a moment when they're in retreat, everywhere from Hong Kong to Eastern Europe. We're basically unable to do that because our own president echoes the vocabulary of dictators and describing the press as the enemy of the people. And that was before the events of the last 72 hours, which of course, less than democratic voices around the world have wasted no time in pointing to and capitalizing on. What I often said in the campaign was that the world needs America right now, but it can't be just any America. And I think that continues to be true. America at our best still represents a powerful force for these values and the power of it was always that these were not strictly or uniquely American values, that our values is country aligned when we were at our best, with values that were shared even by people living under regimes that were hostile to the United States.

And so the question has become, can we recover that. And the job of the next president, and I'm working very hard to make sure that's President Biden, will be to quickly act to restore us credibility. If there's hope, I think it's in the scope of the challenges that the world faces, which cannot be faced alone, by any country. Take climate, it just can't be addressed without the U.S. because... we're a big emitter, but I think for other reasons too. It also can't be addressed by the US alone because we represent less than 15% of the emissions. You could say the same about the pandemic and about global public health. You could say the same about really any number of 21st century challenges from cybersecurity to terrorism. And so the challenges remain the kind of challenges that only work if countries are working together and where the US can and should play acute leadership role.

It also of course means that the US should be participating in the strengthening and if necessary the reform of international institutions that were largely built on terms that were set by the US, but that are due for reform. And that's why it's so unfortunate to see, for example, the president decided to withdraw from the WHO instead of in that forum calling for whatever changes there-- there may be some legitimate changes that need to be made. The US should be leading the way... I believe that the

United States can recover from this moment, but the window is vanishing and the next president will have a lot of work to do.

Derek Chollet (19:25):

Well one of those challenges I'd like to ask you about something you've recently written about in the Washington Post and that's China. There's no question that China and both its direction and the US response to it is going to be a dominant foreign policy issue in the campaign and be a top tier issue for the next president. In this Washington Post piece, you wrote that China is banking on Trump winning and having another four years of him in office. So at first I'd like to hear from you about how you see the China threat and what we should be doing about it. And secondly, to talk more about why you're so worried about Trump's reelection, from the perspective of how you see China.

Pete Buttigieg (20:13):

I think the China challenge represents one of the biggest issues that the next president will have to deal with and America has to deal with right now. And well, I don't believe that we are inevitably destined for a Cold War-type relationship. I do believe that the economic, political, and ideological contest is becoming one that we, whose dimensions we can't ignore. I also believe that nothing would be more beneficial to China's position in that strategic rivalry, than the reelection of Donald Trump. First of all, it keeps the United States polarized, chaotic, divided, and weakened. Secondly, it makes it very difficult to respond to the human rights violations, whether we're talking about Xinjiang province, or whether we're talking about the repression of democratic speakers and protestors in Hong Kong. Uh, partly because we don't have the credibility to do it when our president is acting the way that he does, but also because this president has shown no enthusiasm for all of his tough on China rhetoric, the area where it would be perhaps the most beneficial to be tough on the CCP and on the agenda which is with respect to what most of the world regards as unacceptable behavior toward its own citizens is an area where this president has been content to remain silent and has made it pretty clear that he's doing so in the service of trade goals.

There are lots of questions of whether the president's trade strategy will yield any real stability and in long-term benefit. And of course so much depends on strategic alliances, transatlantic relationships to begin with, but not only transatlantic relationships, which the president has done everything in his power to set fire to. You look at Australia, which is facing its own China challenge in a heightened way. And ordinarily would be able to turn to the United States, uh, in a way that I think is right now is attenuated at best. So all of this puts us on the back foot with respect to a China challenge that I actually think, and maybe a little differently than some of my party, really does represent a major issue, whether we're talking about some of the technological vulnerabilities that are emerging, whether we're talking about their domestic model that involves the use of technology, really perfection of dictatorship, or whether we're talking about activities... in the region.

There's no question that this challenge is only going to move larger over time. And yet here too, we know that in the context of things like combating climate change, we will have to come to terms with China in order for the world to advance. This is an incredibly complex and very nuanced diplomatic challenge. Needless to say, complex, nuance, diplomatic challenges are not the strong suit of this president. But worse than that... Chinese state voices are wasting no time in invoking the imagery of what's gone on in the United States for the last week to make it harder than ever for any American

voice, even outside of the White House to point to the disturbing nature of how China has really detonated the one country, two systems doctrine with its recent actions in Hong Kong.

Derek Chollet (23:46):

Your campaign represented a new generation and how you see if at all differences in how the rising generation looks at America's role in the world and American foreign policy. And related to that, how should we be talking about it? I think one of the things we've seen over the last, certainly during the Trump years, but I would argue, it goes back even to when president Obama was in office, a divide between the so-called foreign policy establishment and how the debates unfold in places like Washington and at thinktanks and inside the halls of government and Congress and; and how folks in South Bend, Indiana, or, other parts of the United States, they don't, don't think about America's role in the world day to day. I think an increasing distance that we've seen. I'd be curious, the lessons that you've learned having someone with deep foreign policy experience, but also obviously, a son of the Midwest who's worked every day to try to make people's lives better in South Bend. How do you, how did you try to get at this problem? So it's the generational aspect of it as well as a geographic aspect of it.

Pete Buttigieg (25:26):

I always thought about what it would take to have a foreign policy for South Bend, and for the South Bends of the world. Because of course this really is immediate and close to home in so many ways. If there's an armed conflict, people from my part of the country are more likely to be called up to serve. If there was a trade war, the manufacturing facilities one or two miles from where I'm sitting and the farms four or five miles from where I'm sitting are going to feel the pain. All of these things are very directly consequential for American life. It comes back to that broader account of politics I was offering that it's really about the everyday. But of course takes a little bit of work to articulate that when it comes to foreign policy, and if we don't talk about it in those terms: this is how we make sure that you prosper economically... then it can only be expressed in emotional terms like the Trump narrative of America being somehow taken advantage of and the need to put, as he puts it America first, which of course amounts to America alone.

But most people around here, aren't worried about whether, forgive me, at a fancy diplomatic conference, right. Uh, American leaders are being treated with higher or lower regard. They're worried about what's going to happen in the neighborhood. And yet, well, what's going to happen in the neighborhood is very much impacted by this. And I think that the job political leadership in particular is to express and articulate that. My own state, just to take one example, Indiana, has a wonderful bipartisan tradition through figures like Lee Hamilton, a Democrat in the House, and Richard Lugar, Republican in the Senate of doing just that...

Now, when it comes to the generational dimension, I think the biggest thing to remember is that if your political consciousness started any time after 9/11--so let's say from the Iraq war onward-- then in the very same way that an older generation's understanding of America's role in the world was likely to be fashioned in an atmosphere of moral certitude, at least in terms of the rhetoric; now more than ever, your understanding of America's role in world is one of deep moral ambivalence. Again, I don't want to wave away all of the moral complexity of America's conduct of cold war patent policy. But the basic self image and the basic narrative, which was bipartisan, if not universal from World War II, through most of the Cold War tended to associate America... with ideas of democracy and the expansion of human

rights. And however, imperfectly we did it, that was the general sense of what it meant for... many, many Americans.

I'm not sure we can count on that anymore to be true for anyone who came of age at that moment or younger, which basically means anyone younger than me. I was a sophomore in college when 9/11 happened, and 9/11 might've been the last world event that, in a way actually reinforced that sense. And of course, president Bush tried to grab hold of that kind of good versus evil rhetoric that animated his language, and yet, not much longer after the invasion of Iraq, there was more than ever a sense of ambivalence about what we were doing and why. So we have a generation now that is mistrustful of what it means for America to participate in the world at all. But also a generation that doesn't need anybody to educate them on why big, complex, or abstract, local issues of personal to them.

Right? You don't have to tell a teenager right now that climate change is a life and death issue. They feel it, they are reminding the American political establishment of it. I think that's another source of hope. It's not for nothing that, you know, globally one of the most prominent, climate activists, maybe the most... I'm not sure even today, she is yet old enough to vote if you were an American citizen, uh, maybe just, just barely. And so I think that in that sense, there, there's some hope that the demystification of why these things matter that work doesn't have to be done, what has to be done is bringing it into a common agenda. That's actually getting traction in the political space.

Derek Chollet (29:57):

I'd like to turn to the questions from the audience. I'd like to start with one that comes from a journalist in Poland who asks you, mayor, as a former member of the United States military; What would you do if you were still in uniform and you were deployed to the streets of Washington or another city? What do you think about how the military has been handling the situation? What do you think U.S. allies are taking from this?

Pete Buttigieg (30:33):

I've been in touch with friends who I served with who are horrified about what we're seeing. And again, I think the extraordinary rebuke from general Mattis reflects, uh, something that is really true, not just at the leadership level, but throughout the American military. You got to understand how high regard someone like him is, is held, in the rank and file. I remember a story-- I never served under his command or in the same theater, even--- and yet just from people I was serving with stories about how he had motivated Marines and troops and Iraq elsewhere... to where I felt like I knew a lot about him. So his anguish that, that has clearly propelled him to do something that really goes in many ways against every norm that he's represented, and upheld shows you, I think that the anguish that so many people who swore to uphold the constitution and serve this country are fueling,

I would, I think, weigh whether to resign my commission if I were serving and was ordered to do anything remotely connected to what is being talked about or seen in DC. And I think there's a question of how the military is being once again, as has been true throughout this presidency, but now in a way that it's no longer just symbolic, manipulated, right? It's one thing to use military as prop in a way that's just tasteful or embarrassing. It's another to literally use the military, you know, in an unconstitutional fashion to... effectively, uh, trampled, the very first amendment rights that, remember, when you take that oath, you take the oath to the constitutional language of all of the service member oath, enlisted,

and officer are all about your loyalty to the constitution ops the president, not to the commander, um, but the constitution. And that is why this is such a painful moment for those in uniform, as it is a painful moment in the country, I imagine it would be difficult. I'm thinking Poland was one of the countries whose soldiers that interacted with often when I was deployed overseas, it would be a tough time to look our allied soldiers in the eye right now knowing that our coalitions are built in my view, not only on shared security interests, but in many ways around shared values.

I suppose where I can draw some hope is the fact that, while the president clearly is not leading in the right direction, there are these responses coming from within our country coming from citizens, coming from institutions, that are ready to insist that what he's doing is, is anathema to the, the very constitutional values that motivate people to certain first place. I don't know if one person that I served with who got into the military for the purpose of being turned against fellow Americans speaking up for equality in this country.

Derek Chollet (34:02):

Yeah. I'd like to build on this theme of service with another question that's come in about national service and getting your thoughts on the role that national service in particularly new programs for national service should play in recovering from both the pandemic, uh, as well as the economic crises that this country's facing.

Pete Buttigieg (34:32):

So I'm a big believer in the potential of national service, which I would define as voluntary, but as close as possible to a universal civilian service. The military is not for everybody. But one of the things I took from military service was a sense of being side by side with people radically different from me and coming to learn to trust my life to people who had different regional and racial backgrounds, different politics, different beliefs from different generations. And that is obviously something we need a lot more of in a polarized and divided country right now. And so I think we should try to recreate that same effect in expanded national civilian service too. It meets the moment of the COVID pandemic in a very important and compelling way, which is that we're going to need a lot of people to do this work.

Look, I think about contact tracing, uh, the best estimates suggest between 100,000 and 200,000 people that are needed to effectively undertake a contact tracing program. That will be part of what it means to responsibly step into a sort of new normal. And that's, before we even get to the vaccine. I'm concerned that there's still an unspoken or unconsidered presumption that the moment that vaccine is invented is the moment that the problem of COVID-19 is solved. In reality, the effort to distribute that vaccine, to make it available to everybody. And in a mistrustful society for everybody, to decide to take it. I can't remember the latest survey numbers, but it is a long way from a hundred percent...

And so there's a lot of work that we have to do in terms of trust, but also a lot of work that we have to do just in terms of logistics, to make it available. All of which points to the value of expanded service, which I think is even independent of the things that people can work on for the reasons I've just mentioned can be really good for our country. It's worth mentioning that actually, the equipment, so to speak, the mechanisms for dramatically expanded national service already exist. Every state has a service commission. The CNCS is the kind of federal body that, uh, manages funding for efforts like AmeriCorps or Vista, which are very successful service oriented programs here in the U.S.. All it would

take would be a bigger appropriation, more money, which could be part of the next pandemic relief act in the U.S. Senate and House.

That's all it would take. Many legislators are working on it right now. And I hope that this gets traction because I think it could address not only the short term crisis, but some of our long term needs as a country. And the goal. Again, we're not trying to impose it on anybody, but to reach the point as a society where it's such a norm, that whether you're applying for your first job or whether you're applying to university, you can expect that the first question you'll get, uh, whether it's on your application or by way of small talk at an orientation event is a, you know, where'd you serve what'd you learn? And what was it like?

Derek Chollet (37:46):

Well, on the question of contract tracing, which you mentioned is, is a potential avenue for service. We have a question that's come in from Twitter about the use of technology-- whether it's artificial intelligence or in responding to COVID-- and concerns that raises about civil liberties. And how we try to balance what would be a great benefit of technology in terms of, in terms of trying to contain COVID with civil liberties, particularly civil liberties of minorities. How do you think about that balance?

Pete Buttigieg (38:25):

I think it's a real challenge, and it's one of the reasons, again, why I think the issue of societal trust is going to be a very important factor in whether we can succeed. Different countries have adopted different models. I think we, in many respects from a social perspective can find, maybe more alignment for U.S. purposes in European models than Asian models, even though both have developed a pretty effective... strategies for technology and contact tracing.

There are a lot of good reason to be anxious about handing data to any government as the very moment when our current government is showing authoritarian tendencies. At the same time, there's a quirk in American psychology around this and that we have freely handed over our data and really intimate traceable and, sometimes vulnerable ways to unaccountable corporations that don't even have the democratic safeguards that our government does. I think the real question we need to resolve as a country is what we think our relationship to our data even is, because I don't think we've done that, that, that work. And without it, I think are going to continue to have a little bit of trouble with coherence, as we try to hit the right strategy on something specific and concrete, like what a widely accepted American version of contact tracing app would actually look like.

Derek Chollet (39:50):

I've got a couple more questions I'd like to get through. One that comes in from one of our listeners, who's asked you very simply, how can the U.S. best repair its image on the world stage in a post-Trump administration?

Well, I think it's going to be the work of more than one presidency because credibility takes time. But I think the best thing we can do is authentically lead in ways that make the world a better place and get to work quickly on doing that. And again, I can't exactly call it good news, but the opportunity is that there are plenty of problems that require us to authentically lead on public health, for us to authentically lead on climate. It presents an opportunity for America to put our best face forward to

restore credibility, not through language, but through action and to earn the trust that I think is going to be so important for these relationships to become healthy in the future.

Derek Chollet (40:53):

Last question that's come in, which is what are your plans in the short to medium term? You're an important voice on the, on the national stage. You've earned it. I hope you keep at it. But how do you see yourself continuing to contribute in the years ahead?

Pete Buttigieg (41:17):

Well I know what I'm doing through November. So, first and foremost, I'm doing everything in my power to help Joe Biden get elected president. And not just because of what I believe we're up against in terms of the current presidency, but also because I believe that kind of leadership he exudes and particularly the compassion that he exudes is exactly what our country needs. With Win the Era, I'm working to help to elect candidates up and down the ticket too. This is a moment that's actually reminding us just how much offices, besides president matter, right? Whether we're talking about racial justice or whether we're talking about pandemic resilience, mayors, prosecutors, district attorneys, these offices matter enormously too. And so, I'm working with candidates from the county supervisor level all the way to Senate and gubernatorial, because I think at this moment, unfortunately, just as we're seeing how important these other offices are, there's less attention, less oxygen than ever for those races, because we can barely keep tracking real presidential politics with everything else going on.

I'm doing what I can to help with pandemic resilience efforts, especially connecting them to the community there. So that's more than enough to keep me busy for the next few months. And I'm struck by how busy, I think we've all made ourselves without necessarily leaving the four walls. It's hard to say, but I know that there'll be more ways to make myself useful. And I think right now is a moment to direct our energies less toward the role we think we ought to have, and more toward the difference we think we can make

Derek Chollet:

Absolutely. And one, I very much hope that once we can all travel again, you're going to be get out on the road, both here in the U.S. but also around the world to talk about these issues. One last, very last question, which is, what are you reading right now to get through this moment or to help understand this moment? Or maybe not even reading, what are you watching? What are you listening to?

Pete Buttigieg (43:21):

There's an excellent book called White Fragility that I think can help shed a lot of light...by Robin DiAngelo. I think she's a sociologist and it's, I think, it's a really important book for well-intentioned white people to spend time with. I think all of us are looking for historical parallels. So I'm going back to FDR the defining moment. This isn't quite the early thirties, but I think we can learn a lot from in particular, the fact that, that the New Deal didn't emerge as a campaign promise that was then executed and tapped. Once he got elected, it was a response to the reality.

And this isn't 1968, but it is a good time to read about 1968. So Charles Kaiser's book about it. Um, so those are a few of the things that I'm turning to in between zoom calls. This is definitely a moment to try to arm ourselves with some intellectual nourishment. But at the end of the day, I think America, and I

think the American center left and left. We're not going to find all the answers from, from, uh, other arrows or from other countries. We gotta learn from them and let's figure out what truly American and truly 21st century social democracy is going to look like.

Derek Chollet ([44:49](#)):

Well, mayor Buttigieg that's a terrific point end on. I want to thank you for taking the time to be with us today at Brussels forum, 2020.