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## The Start of the Argument

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While many in our country are following the daily national soap opera of Washington Democrats attempting to throw President Donald Trump out of office, Newt Gingrich, my father, is attempting to raise our collective vision to focus on a national threat that exists outside our borders.

In his recent book, “Trump vs. China: Facing America’s Greatest Threat,” the former speaker of the House lays out the realities of the greatest threat our country faces to its long-term survival.

Americans must first understand that our country is very, very different from China. Our country is founded on the belief that God gives rights to individuals, who then loan them to the government, which is divided into three branches.

That structure ensures that governing is a messy, inefficient process, but our Founding Fathers designed it this way intentionally -- to prevent a monarch from rising to power. To get things done, we have to have national discussions; people must push government officials in the right direction.

In China, Xi Jinping holds several jobs. First and foremost, he is the general secretary of the Communist Party and then he is the commander of the country’s armed forces and, finally, its president. When Jinping talks about progress, he is referring to the welfare of these groups in that order. First, the Chinese Communist Party is to be successful and (SET ITAL) then (END ITAL) the nation and (SET ITAL) then (END ITAL) the individuals in the nation. The party and the nation come before the people.

In our country, individuals come first, then government. The U.S. government is successful only if individual people in our country succeed. When Trump talks about our nation’s future, he is

referring to the welfare of the individuals who make up our nation. “Your voice, your hopes, and your dreams, will define our American destiny,” Trump said during his inaugural speech in 2017. “And your courage and goodness and love will forever guide us along the way.” It’s a people-first vision.

Trump’s deal-making with China is about more than trade; it’s about safeguarding our intellectual property. For decades, China has been stealing U.S. inventions and using the stolen technology for themselves.

A U.S. scientist recently told me about an experience he had when he accompanied several of his Chinese colleagues onto a flight. As anyone who has taken a flight since 2001 has experienced, security officials check computers before allowing them onto the plane. Routine, right? Not to the Chinese passengers. In fact, the Chinese scientists told the U.S. scientist that they thought the security officials who were checking their laptops were stealing the data they contained. Possibly, this is what happens in their home country.

Americans would be skeptical of any such claims. After all, government officials can’t be that controlling and intrusive, can they?

Well, in China they can. In China, the Communist Party has been promoting an app, Study the Great Nation, as a way to learn more about China and Jinping. Chinese people have been ordered to download the app by employers, associations or other organizations.

The app includes articles and information about Jinping and the Communist Party, and it awards points to users based on activity that is translated to a leaderboard.

It also “enables authorities to retrieve messages and photos from users’ phones, browse their contacts and Internet history, and activate an audio recorder inside the devices,” wrote Anna Fifield, the Beijing bureau chief for The Washington Post.

While this might seem to Americans to be an improbable intrusion into their personal lives, it’s now routinely accepted in China. Two years ago, China passed a law requiring technology companies to provide user information to the Chinese government; cell phones in China are tied to individuals’ national ID cards.

“We must ensure that the United States retains its position as the planet’s champion of freedom, dignity, the rule of law, religious tolerance, democratic pluralism, good health, clean air and water, and innovation in science and manufacturing,” Gingrich has posited.

How can we reach this goal? By ensuring we follow the same process for every national problem that our nation faces, Gingrich contends.

Because of the construct of our government, one person cannot decide what the problem is and how to solve it. Instead, we, as a collective group of citizens, must recognize the problem, debate the issues, form a consensus, mobilize and implement. Only by following that inefficient process can we ensure success.

The solution for America, with all the challenges it faces, is to have an engaged citizenry time after time after time, but the engagement has to be in the right direction and on the right topic.