

# [***Michael Cohen Testifies In Donald Trump Criminal Trial; Jury Selection In Bob Menendez Corruption And Bribery Trial; White House Maintains Israel Support Is "Ironclad"; Anti-Israel Protesters Disrupt Duke Graduation; Republicans Look To Flip Manchin Senate Seat; Manchin Endorses Elliott For Senate Seat; West Virginia Votes On Open Senate Seat Tomorrow; Trump And Biden Signal Willingness To Debate; Recent Poll Shows Donald Trump Leading President Biden On Issues Of Economy And Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Former Trump Lawyer Michael Cohen Testifies In Hush Money Criminal Trial Of Donald Trump; Jury Being Selected For Senator Bob Menendez Corruption Trial; Secretary Of State Antony Blinken Criticizes Israel's Prosecution Of War In Gaza***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6C1C-BFK1-F072-X0KX-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

JESSE WATTERS, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Let's go to you, Harold.

JEANINE PIRRO, FOX NEWS CHANNEL LEGAL ANALYST: Go.

HAROLD FORD JR., FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONTRIBUTOR: How do you call them? The what? (INAUDIBLE)

Anthony Burgess, a school bus driver in Florida is having students write down their favorite quotes and words of encouragement to decorate the interior of the school bus. Among the stand out quotes, your mindset can change everything. Thank you, man.

PIRRO: That's wonderful.

WATTERS: All right, Harold. Have a great show everybody.

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Jesse, that was kind of like a half a thing. That wasn't One More Thing.

WATTERS: That was a teeny little One More Thing.

BAIER: All right. All right. We'll see you. Thank you.

Good evening. We are coming to you tonight live just down the hall from THE FIVE in the Fox News World Headquarters in New York. I'm Bret Baier.

The federal corruption and bribery trial for New Jersey Democratic Senator Bob Menendez gets underway. The Biden administration touts what it calls its ironclad support of Israel, but its top diplomat gets critical of the Israeli war effort.

And former President Trump scores big in new swing state polling, we'll break down the numbers.

But first, breaking tonight, the star witness of the prosecution case against former President Donald Trump takes the stand. Former Trump lawyer and self-described fixer Michael Cohen is implicating his old boss in the scheme to silence and adult film star's claim that they had a sexual encounter.

But Cohen will soon face a defense cross examination that will directly question his credibility.

Correspondent Nate Foy is outside the New York State Supreme Court again tonight with the latest. Good evening, Nate.

NATE FOY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Bret. At the end of court tonight, Michael Cohen testified that former President Donald Trump personally approved of his reimbursement plan after Cohen paid $130,000 to adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

Now, Cohen says that Trump and former Trump Organization CFO Allen Weisselberg disguise the payments as Cohen's income after Trump won the White House.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Any messages for Donald Trump today? Do you plan on telling the truth?

FOY (voice over): He's admitted to lying under oath several times. But today the prosecution's star witness Michael Cohen promised the truth, telling the jury former President Donald Trump participated in a scheme to pay off adult film actress Stormy Daniels.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: That we call a legal expense, a legal expense.

FOY (voice over): Cohen told the court Trump wanted the story taken care of to protect his image with women after the release of the Access Hollywood tape.

Cohen testified Trump told him, "Push it out as long as you can, just get past the election. If I win, it has no relevance. And if I lose, I don't even care."

Cohen eventually wire Daniels the money using a home equity line of credit to conceal the payment from his own wife. Cohen testified he told Trump first saying, "Everything required Mr. Trump's sign off. On top of that, I wanted the money back."

According to Cohen, former Trump Organization CFO Allen Weisselberg facilitated his reimbursement. Trump himself can address Cohen publicly because he's bound by the court's gag order.

TRUMP: We have a corrupt judge and we have the judge that's highly conflicted. There's no fraud here. There's no crime here. This is four weeks of keeping me from not campaigning.

FOY (voice over): Cohen is a convicted felon and served prison time partly for his dealings with Daniels.

Today outside the courthouse, Republican supporters of Trump say prosecutors are now using Cohen to influence this year's election.

SEN. J.D. VANCE (R-OH): Whether you love Donald Trump, whether you like Donald Trump or whether you're a Democrat or don't care about ***politics***, what's going on inside that courtroom is a threat to American democracy.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

FOY (on camera): When court resumes tomorrow at 9:30, Cohen will again be on the witness stand under direct examination.

So, as you mentioned, Trump's lawyers still haven't had a chance to push back on some of the claims that he made during his testimony today, and to push back on his overall credibility, Bret.

BAIER: More on this with the panel. Nate, thanks.

As mentioned, jury selection is underway in the federal corruption and bribery trial of New Jersey Democratic Senator Bob Menendez. He has pleaded not guilty. Senior Congressional Correspondent Chad Pergram here in New York with details.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

CHAD PERGRAM, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONGRESSIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Bob Menendez has represented New Jersey in the Senate since 2007. But the Feds accused him of also representing Qatar and Egypt.

Prosecutors allege the senator of writing ghost letters to other senators to unlock $300 million for Egypt. And then there are the shiny objects, gold bars that one businessman is accused of giving to Menendez to curry favor with Qatar. Menendez chaired the Foreign Relations Committee, but the indictment forced him to see the gavel.

SEN. BOB MENENDEZ (D-NJ): It opens a dangerous door for the Justice Department to take the normal engagement of members of Congress with a foreign government and to transform those engagements into a charge of being a foreign agent.

PERGRAM (voice over): This is not his first run in with the law. Menendez stood on trial for unrelated bribery charges in 2017. Back then, fellow New Jersey Democrat Cory Booker testified on his behalf but Booker has all been given up on Menendez this time.

SEN. CORY BOOKER (D-NJ): I'm not going to follow that day-to-day.

PERGRAM: You talk to him at all lately about the trial or anything?

BOOKER: I have not discussed the trial in any detail or depth.

PERGRAM (voice over): Jurors failed to reach a verdict in Menendez's last trial resulting in a hung jury, that cleared the way for the senator to run again and win in 2018.

MENENDEZ: Today is resurrection day. And I want to thank God once again for allowing me to stand before you as an innocent man.

PERGRAM (voice over): The senator's wife Nadine also faces trial in the summer, expect his defense counsel to try to cast blame on her, selling favors on behalf of her husband.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

PERGRAM (on camera): Now, jury selection continues tomorrow, the trial could run through the Fourth of July.

Now, Menendez he still might run as an independent, the filing deadline, that is June 4th, Bret.

BAIER: Chad, thank you.

President Biden's top diplomat is delivering some of the strongest criticism yet of Israel's conduct of the war in Gaza. Secretary of State Anthony Blinken is maligning both Israeli tactics in what he claims is a lack of results.

President Biden meantime continues to receive heavy criticism from both Republicans and some Democrats over his refusal to supply Israel with some weapons because of its military operations in Rafah.

White House Correspondent Peter Doocy joins us live now from the North Lawn. Good evening, Peter.

PETER DOOCY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Bret. Just a few minutes ago as we were coming to air, President Biden was leaving a reception in the Rose Garden and a reporter asked him how confident he is that he can bring home the hostages to which President Biden said, never give up hope, it was not on camera, but it's also not really consistent with what other Biden officials who have seen the intelligence about the hostages told us today.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: My name is Joe Biden. I work for Kamala Harris.

DOOCY (voice over): President Biden's team is hoping to clarify what the White House means by ironclad.

JAKE SULLIVAN, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: His commitment to Israel is ironclad. ironclad doesn't mean you never disagree.

DOOCY (voice over): It also means according to a report in The Washington Post, offering Israel valuable assistance in an effort to persuade it to hold back including sensitive intelligence to help the Israeli military pinpoint the location of Hamas leaders and find the group's hidden tunnels.

REP. DARRELL ISSA (R-CA): Conditionally, having any kind of condition on offering them the ability to micro target Hamas is absurd.

DOOCY (voice over): National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan rattled off 10 bullet points to clarify President Biden's position on the war. And the headline:

SULLIVAN: We do not believe what is happening in Gaza is a genocide.

DOOCY (voice over): But they do believe it's time for Israel to get out of Gaza if they can't explain in detail a plan to protect innocent civilians.

ANTONY BLINKEN, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE: If they leave and get out of Gaza as we believe they need to do. Then, you're going to have a vacuum and a vacuum that's likely to be filled by chaos, by anarchy, and ultimately by Hamas again.

DOOCY (voice over): A ceasefire deal hinges on hostage releases, but officials claimed not to know how many remain.

SULLIVAN: We know there are deceased hostages. And we know there are living hostages.

DOOCY (voice over): And Sullivan sees parallels between the Israel Hamas war and efforts to find peace between Ireland and Northern Ireland led by George Mitchell.

SULLIVAN: Senator Mitchell said quite famously that negotiations are a thousand days of failure in one day of success. And right now, we're in the former days rather than the latter day.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

DOOCY (on camera): And the numbers of women and children thought who have been killed in this war had been reduced down by about 50 percent.

The United Nations says they're not just changing the numbers based on nothing but that the Gaza Ministry of Health has a better idea now of casualties. The current tally is 4,959 women and 7,797 children killed. That is still a staggering amount of lives lost, Bret.

BAIER: Yes, definitely. Peter Doocy live in the North Lawn. Peter, thanks.

One of the most popular entertainers, comedians in the world has now felt the effects of anti-Israel demonstrations on college campuses. Protesters heckled Jerry Seinfeld Sunday during his commencement address at Duke University.

Also several incidents at several other schools around the country including DePaul University in Chicago. That's where Correspondent Garrett Tenney is tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

GARRETT TENNEY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Anti-Israel protests disrupting college graduations across the country this weekend.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Jerry Seinfeld, candidate for the honorary degree of Doctor of Arts.

TENNEY (voice over): In North Carolina, dozens of students walked out of Duke University's graduation ceremony as comedian Jerry Seinfeld who is Jewish and has publicly voiced support for Israel took the stage to deliver his commencement address.

Some students cheering on the protesters while many in the crowd booed as the group left and it was a similar scene in Richmond, Virginia where dozens of graduating students walked out as Governor Glenn Youngkin gave their commencement address.

At U.C. Berkeley, hundreds of protesters repeatedly interrupted the graduation program with loud pro-Palestinian chants. Not everyone in attendance was happy about the disruption.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I can't hear the speakers at all. And you know, we worked hard for four years. And truly, this is a Berkeley degree. We're extremely excited.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You know, our son came here to study engineering, not idiocy.

TENNEY (voice over): The White House is bracing for similar protests next weekend when President Biden is scheduled to deliver the commencement address at Morehouse College in Atlanta, where some students and faculty say they want the president's invitation rescinded.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The general feeling on the ground is that we don't want him here. Frankly, the issue on cop city and the genocide in Palestine and just the straw that broke the camel's back.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

TENNEY (on camera): Here at DePaul University, students at this encampment say they are now preparing for the possibility of police involvement after negotiations with school officials broke down over the weekend, and students ignored the school's deadline to clear out by noon Sunday. Graduation here, still a month away, Bret.

BAIER: Garrett Tenney in Chicago. Garrett, thanks.

Up next, we look at the race to replace one longtime Democratic senator, we'll take you there.

First, Beyond our Borders tonight. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy says Ukrainian troops are engaging in intense battles with the advancing Russian army in two border areas of Ukraine. Outgunned and outnumbered, Ukrainian soldiers are trying to hold back a significant Russian ground offensive in recent days.

Meanwhile, the death toll from a Russian apartment building collapse blamed on Ukrainian shelling rose to 15.

Twin natural disasters in Indonesia, rescuers recovered dozens of bodies after monsoon rains triggered flash floods on Sumatra Island bringing down torrents of cold lava and mud. 43 people are confirmed dead so far, another 15 missing.

Mount Ibu volcano erupts spewing thick grey ash and dark clouds more than 16,000 feet into the sky for five minutes. Officials are telling residents and tourists to stay at least three miles away.

And Microsoft announced it will invest $4.3 billion in France this year, Microsoft planning to expand its next generation cloud and A.I. infrastructure bringing up to 25,000 of the most advanced graphics processing units or GPUs to France by the end of 2025.

Just some of the other stories Beyond our Borders tonight. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: More than 2 million people from Texas to Florida have been or are still on alert for powerful and dangerous thunderstorms. Tonight, the systems are capable of producing softball sized hail, hurricane force wind gusts, and possible tornadoes. The threat of severe extreme weather will last, we're told, over the next few days.

The central and southern U.S. have reportedly and recently been logged down with some 60 deadly tornadoes, severe weather outbreaks over the past few weeks.

The demolition of a large section of the Francis Scott Key Bridge, took place a short time ago. The span crumbled into the water in just seconds. The longest trestle toppled away from the ground.

Dali, the grounded Dali container ship and slid off its bow, sending the wall of water splashing back as you see here toward the vessel. The Dali crashed into the bridge in late March.

Stocks were mixed today as investors awaited key inflation data The Dow lost 81. The S&P 500 fell one. The NASDAQ gained 47.

West Virginia voters begin the task of replacing longtime Democratic Senator Joe Manchin tomorrow. Their Senate primary is one of six open races. Democrats are hoping to keep this fall. Correspondent Bill Melugin is in Charleston, West Virginia tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BILL MELUGIN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL NATIONAL CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Four Republicans, the road to retaking the Senate may start in West Virginia.

Senator Joe Manchin's retirement makes this race the most likely flip for the GOP, according to Fox analysis.

Current West Virginia Governor Jim justice has been endorsed by former President Trump in a state he won by nearly 40 points in 2020.

His primary opponent is West Virginia Congressman Alex Mooney, a member of the House Freedom Caucus. He is endorsed by Ted Cruz, and he's been calling himself the true Trump candidate in the race.

REP. ALEX MOONEY (R-WV): I have a voting record for 10 years as a congressman and 100 percent pro-life, and supported Trump's agenda. I'm running against a former Democrat Jim justice, who still has liberal views on many issues and might use to act like a Democrat.

GOV. JIM JUSTICE (R-WV): If that be the case, why is Trump endorsed me and did not endorse him? I've been a governor for 7-1/2 years. I've seen Alex Mooney one time as our congressman. It's absolutely very weak.

MELUGIN: West Virginians tell Fox, a Trump endorsement goes a long way here.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think it carries a lot of weight, because we're a Trump country.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I would have backed the governor anyway, but it helps with Trump. Trump's demand.

MELUGIN (voice over): As for the Democratic primary, it's a three-way race between former Marine, Zach Shrewsbury, a self-described populace leftist on the progressive wing of the party. And Don Blankenship, a former coal CEO, who spent a year in prison for violating safety standards.

But Joe Manchin is backing Glenn Elliott, the mayor of Wheeling.

MAYOR GLENN ELLIOTT (D), SENATORIAL CANDIDATE, WEST VIRGINIA: I think a lot of voters in history in West Virginia have gotten frustrated with the Democratic Party, but I don't think they've left for good.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

MELUGIN (on camera): And Bret, the West Virginia voters, we've been talking to out here, say their biggest issues of concern are obviously the coal mining industry, fentanyl, and the economy.

Tomorrow, they will hit the polls, they will make their voices heard. They will decide who will officially be matching up this November to replace Senator Joe Manchin. We'll send it back to you.

BAIER: Bill Melugin, live in West Virginia. Bill, thanks.

Up next, new polls on the presidential race and the increasing prospects of the nominees, yes, debating.

First, here is what some of our Fox affiliates around this country are covering today. FOX5 in New York, has a person of interest connected to the brutal choking and raping of a woman in New York is now in custody. Kashaan Parks, faces a slew of charges, including rape, assault, sex abuse, and strangulation. Police say he has two prior arrests.

Fox 17 in Nashville Tennessee, as five officers hailed as heroes for taking down the Covenant school shooter last year receive another national award for their valor. The officers were honored in Washington over the weekend. A former student at the school killed three children and three adults before being fatally shot.

And this is a live look at Kansas City, courtesy of EarthCam. One of the big stories there tonight from FOX4, our affiliate. The National Football League schedule will start September 5th, with the defending Super Bowl champion, Chiefs, hosting the Baltimore Ravens.

It will be a rematch of last season's AFC Championship Game. The rest of the league schedule set to be released Wednesday.

That's tonight's live look "OUTSIDE THE BELTWAY" from SPECIAL REPORT. We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BAIER: New polls over the weekend show former President Trump, leading in five crucial battleground states. This comes as the drumbeat gets louder for debates between the two presumptive nominees.

Here is chief Washington correspondent Mike Emanuel.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

MIKE EMANUEL, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CHIEF WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT (voice over): Former President Trump leads President Biden in five critical battleground states: Michigan, Arizona, Nevada, Georgia, and Pennsylvania among registered voters.

Among likely voters, that same poll from the New York Times and Siena College reveals a tighter race with Mr. Trump leading in five states. With Mr. Biden ahead in Michigan and narrowly behind Mr. Trump in Wisconsin, and Pennsylvania.

DONALD TRUMP (R), FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: The New York Times just came out with a poll. That shows us leading everywhere by a lot.

EMANUEL (voice over): It is unclear at the moment if Trump and Biden will face off on the debate stage this fall, though both sound eager to do it.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Mr. President, when will you debate President Trump?

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Set it up.

EMANUEL (voice over): Trump use similar language on his social media platform.

DONALD TRUMP (R), FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Let's set it up right now. I am ready to go anywhere that you are. We're going to win and we're going to win big.

EMANUEL: The Commission on Presidential Debates announced locations and dates for general election debates last November. Monday, September 16th, at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas. Tuesday, October 1st at Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia. Wednesday, October 9th, at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, Utah.

The one skeptical RNC has signaled a willingness to participate in CPD events and is arguing for holding debate sooner.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

EMANUEL: The latest polling reveals a shift among young, black, and Hispanic voters desiring change and unhappy about the economy and military action in Gaza. All key constituencies which could tear apart the president's democratic coalition. Bret?

BAIER: Mike, thank you.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What's your biggest concern?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The borders.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think democracy -- keeping democracy.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Reproductive freedoms is probably the most important.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I just wish the economy was better.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I would also say the economy, inflation is a big issue as well.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The borders is important.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Economy is the big one, and immigration.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Well, the newest polls out. The New York Times Philadelphia Inquirer, Siena College poll just out. Most important issue, just like you hear those folks: economy, 22 percent, then, you see immigration and abortion. Economic conditions, how do you describe them? Excellent is only three percent. Good, only fair, 27 percent. Poor, 49 percent. And who do you trust better on the economy? Biden at 38 percent, former President Trump at 58 percent.

Let's get some perspective tonight from FOX News chief political analyst Brit Hume and Larry Ludlow of FOX Business. Good evening, gentlemen. First to you, Brit. What do you make of the latest polls. It tracks with other polls we've seen about the trust on the economy and how big that issue is.

BRIT HUME, FOX NEWS SENIOR POLITICAL ANALYST: Well, you put that together with the states where Trump appears to be ahead. And remember, Mr. Trump does not need to win all those battleground states. If he holds the states he held in 2020 and wins a couple of those states, you could pick at any number of them you could pick to be the two, he's president. And if the election were held today, I think this poll indicates he would be elected. Obviously, we've got a long way to go. It's only May. But the issues favor him. Abortion favors the Democrats, but the economy and immigration and a number of other issues favor the president. And the people are upset about his performance generally. Age is not an issue they cite, but you know it's in there working against Mr. Biden. So I think that's where the matter stands now. It's not quite fair to say it's Trump's race to lose, but it's getting there slowly.

BAIER: Larry, Reuters, "U.S. consumer sentiment at six month low, inflation exceptions rise. Larger than expected drop in sentiment reported by the University of Michigan Friday was across all age, income, and education groups as well as political party affiliation." You've got to think that that's part of this equation when you look at those polls.

LARRY KUDLOW, FOX BUSINESS HOST: Yes, it's been pretty much -- this was for May, and pretty much you see the same thing January, February, March, and April. Consumer confidence plunging, inflation fears rising, actual inflation has gone up quite a bit, about 4.5 percent at an annual rate. That's the wrong direction. The Fed's target is two. We will get a new number on Wednesday. The Cleveland fed is looking for a difficult number, maybe 5 percent at an annual rate.

This just bodes very poorly for Mr. Biden. Bidenomics is unpopular because it hasn't worked. And there is an affordability crisis going on. Wages are rising more slowly than prices, and that has plagued Biden, except for a few months, pretty much his entire presidency. I don't see that changing, frankly. If anything, the numbers are getting worse.

BAIER: Larry, they stopped talking about Bidenomics. They are saying the numbers still look good for the economy overall. But here is a national economic adviser on the Trump tax cuts expiration. Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAEL BRAINARD, NATIONAL ECONOMIC COUNCIL: The expiration of President Trump's 2017 tax package next year will put the issue of tax fairness front and center. Do we want a tax system that favors the wealthy or the middle class? Tax fairness is central to the president's approach to building an economy that works for all Americans.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: I know you worked for President Trump, but when those tax cuts do expire, when the pledge is nobody will see taxes increase under $400,000 a year, that won't hold true, right?

KUDLOW: It's not true. Look, this is the progressive point of view, with all respect to Ms. Brainard, study after study has shown, National Bureau of Economic Research, various faculties of, heaven forbid, the Ivy League schools and so forth. Poverty went down, inequality went down, unemployment went down for all the minority groups. The biggest gainers were the middle and the lower income classes. I mean, you had just -- weekly wages under Mr. Trump went up about nine percent at an annual rate, OK? Weekly wages have fallen over six percent under Mr. Biden.

If you start raising corporate taxes, raise business taxes, raise individual taxes, you're going to see a sinking economy across the board. And, frankly, if a rising tide lifted all boats during the successful Trump tax cuts, what you will have here is a sinking economy will sink all the boats.

I never understood this. The data is so clear. I don't care what side you're on. Even some of my Democratic economic friends, who are much more moderate than this White House, are saying don't do away with all these tax -- that's a $5 trillion tax hike. It's exactly what the economy does not need.

BAIER: Brit, we are talking a lot about the economy. We see it as still the number one issue. But if you think about the Israel-Gaza situation, in this new poll, the Siena College poll, it has, who do you trust better on the Israel -- Israeli-Palestinian conflict? Trump at 51 percent, Biden at 36 percent. How much do you think that all factors into this moment now? This is, again, a snapshot in time.

HUME: Well, in the end, foreign policy is an issue in all these presidential elections. It is the primary business of the presidency because the executive branch of the federal government is the primary agency for dealing with foreign affairs. States and localities and the private sector have very little to do with it. So this is going to matter.

And for the life of me, Bret, I cannot figure out what the political strategy is being pursued now by the Biden administration. On the one hand, they are supporting Israel still to some extent, saying that the support for Israel is ironclad and all the rest of it. But they are publicly criticizing Israel, threatening to withhold aid and the rest of it. It seems to me, I guess they are supposed to somehow have it both ways. My guess is they are getting the worst of both worlds. People who are supporting Israel aren't happy with him, and the people who are supporting the Palestinians aren't happy with him either. My view is that's a loser for the president. One more thing that's a loser for him.

KUDLOW: It's incredible to me. I mean, Brit, you have been around a long time, foreign policy. Peace and prosperity always the issues in presidential campaigns. Over the weekend, Secretary of State Blinken came out and said Biden now wants Israel completely out of Gaza. They will not sell weapons because they are breaking international humanitarian guidelines, and furthermore, they are withholding key intelligence on Hamas from Israel. It's almost like, whose side are we on here?

And people are smart. They are not dumb. They pick up on this -- 75, 80 percent want Israel to end Hamas all together. This should be an easy issue on this.

BAIER: Last thing, Brit. We are five-and-a-half, a little bit more than that, months away from Election Day. Right now, you just said that the position for the former president looks pretty good, as you look at the map, as you look at the polls, as you look at the issues. A lot can happen in a short time. Paint the picture of how the Biden team comes back from what looks like an uphill battle right now.

HUME: Well, I would say it's not the way they are trying to do it now. It doesn't look to me like there is much of anything that's going to work. Now, we are going to hear endlessly about January 6th. We're going to hear endlessly about the threat to democracy. I'm not sure how many people really believe that, but certainly Democrats all do. And remember, Donald Trump motivates Democrats more than he motivates -- in the past, at least, he has motivated Democrats to come out and vote more than he has motivated Republicans. And that is the one thing that does help the president, is if this were an ordinary garden variety Republican candidate, I think the president would be done, the race would be over. But Trump is controversial and remains so. And that's -- that is an issue that he needs to confront, because the Democrats are going to milk it for all it's worth.

BAIER: Larry?

KUDLOW: With 100,000 people turning out in Wildwood, New Jersey, 100,000 people, New Jersey may be in play. A lot of states may be in play that no one dreamed possible in play.

BAIER: We will see. Cover it all. Larry, Brit, as always, thank you.

KUDLOW: Thank you. Appreciate it very much.

BAIER: Up next, the panel as Former President Trump's one time fixer, now accuser takes the stand against him. Just a few blocks with away, jury selection gets underway for current Senator, Democrat Bob Menendez's criminal trial. We'll bring it to you all.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT: We paid a lawyer a legal expense, legal expense. It's perfectly marked down. The other side doesn't know how to handle it, but they say let's indict him anyway.

SEN. J.D. VANCE, (R-OH): Michael Cohen is the prosecution's star witness. This guy is a convicted felon.

GEORGE CONWAY, ATTORNEY: The government has essentially pre-corroborated Michael Cohen in a lot of ways.

FAREED ZAKARIA, CNN HOST, "FAREED ZAKARIA GPS": And I doubt the New York indictment would have been brought against a defendant whose name was not Donald Trump.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Some different takes as Michael Cohen takes the stand. The prosecution laying out their case just down the road here against former President Trump. "The New York Post," Jonathan Turley writes, "This may be the week Alvin Bragg's case against Trump falls apart. The assumption was that no rational prosecutor would base a major criminal case almost entirely on the testimony of Michael Cohen, who was recently denounced by a judge as a serial perjurer peddling perverse theories in court. The calculus of Alven Bragg is now obvious. He is counting on the jury convicting Trump regardless of the evidence."

What about that and this case? Let's bring in our panel, Charles Payne of FOX Business, Harold Ford Jr., former Tennessee Congressman, co-host of THE FIVE, and "OUTNUMBERED" co-host Kayleigh McEnany. Kayleigh, I know you have been following this. It's been interesting to see the actual case versus all the things that have been covered ad nauseum about it, and the actual crime here and the felony that's underneath all of this. What are your thoughts as we get this first star witness day?

KAYLEIGH MCENANY, FOX NEWS HOST: At the end of the day you have to have a fact pattern that matches the law. That is what any prosecutor is after. And thus far the facts do not match the law. In fact, Jonathan Turley went on in that piece that you just cited to say, look, this might not even get to a jury because, in earnest, this should be dismissed by the judge. After all the witnesses are heard, there will be a motion for a direct verdict from Donald Trump's team, and that should be sustained, unless there is some big new revelation.

One thing we heard today is you get the distinct feeling that Trump, yes, was well-informed of things that were going on, but that he then would direct and micromanage and send things out. From that moment, Michael Cohen, go talk to Weisselberg, you guys figure this out. You don't get the sense of someone directing every little payment, while he's in the Oval Office, by the way, signing away checks. One witness, Madeleine Westerhout, said I often saw him just sign things. That's what he did. He had a million things going on. He just signed things. So absent some smoking gun, the facts just simply don't seem to match the law.

BAIER: Harold, Jonathan Turley has been clear that he thinks that this falls apart. However, there are legal experts who think that there is more to this and that they think the prosecution will eventually deliver and that they haven't yet.

FORD JR.: Thanks for having me. I think that two things can be right. Maybe this case should not have been brought. Maybe Fareed Zakaria is right, if his name were not Trump, this would not be brought. But it has been. So now we are at a point where the most pivotal and dispositive part for the prosecution is now two things. What was the motivation for President Trump in this matter? Number two, and was he involved in whatever they chose to do, which I think is what Kayleigh was saying. Maybe he was not aware and maybe he did something or signed things that he didn't know what was going on. We'll find out.

As long as there is a factual -- some facts are in dispute, they will get this to the jury. I hear what Jonathan is saying. If the prosecution -- excuse me, if the defense in the cross examination is really able to go after him in an intense way, Cohen, and undermine him, maybe Jonathan is right.

But I think there's still some shoes to fall here. And I think today he held serve, Cohen. But as Kayleigh and I know, those of us who have gone to law school, the next few days are going to be very challenging. They are going to be intense and informative. And we will see how Mr. Cohen holds up during that time.

BAIER: We saw the defense on the Stormy Daniels cross, Charles, say, do you hate Donald Trump? And she essentially said yes. Michael Cohen has been on TikTok and every social media saying not only that, but I want to put him behind bars. That's a different animal.

CHARLES PAYNE, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: I will speak for those of us who haven't gone to law school.

(LAUGHTER)

PAYNE: You've got to be kidding me. Really, I'm so confused. Really, just, honestly, the crime I don't see. Why would a man not want his wife to know that he might have gone to bed with a porn star? Listen, they are rewriting history, right? So you get to last week, right, you get the witness in there. And she changes her story so much, so much. Even Bill Maher had to admit, listen, this is not what she told me in an interview. And they're dropping hints about the Me Too stuff and he was physically imposing.

And the same thing here, all this is is a political stunt. And so after these testimonies you see the articles. All the Me Too women, remember? So it feels like it's feeding into a larger, orchestrated narrative to stop President Trump from winning the election. It does not feel like a real trial. Most people still aren't sure what the crime is, and certainly whatever it might be because it's the first time it's ever been charged ever, there is not even -- I don't see anywhere where it's been proven at all that some kind of crime took place, something deliberate, nefarious, and out of the ordinary took place.

FORD: All I'm saying about being a lawyer is where we are at in the case. I don't disagree with you where weather this thing should have been brought or not. But where we are now, if you are the defendant, you can't sit back and make the case this should not have been brought. You're now in a big fight. And the question becomes can that defense team cross-examine --

PAYNE: I honestly believe that --

FORD: I hear everything you're saying.

PAYNE: From the defense's point of view, the only thing they have to worry about is the judge. You're right, it's going to go to the jury because this judge seems to have it out for President Trump. And the bottom, it's just like they blew it with the Hollywood guy, Weinstein, they're blowing it again. But they don't care that they're blowing it.

BAIER: Let me weigh in really quickly. Meantime, just down the street, the jury is being selected for the Bob Menendez case, which is a bribery case. We don't hear a lot about it anyplace else, but it's happening. And there are very few people weighing in on it.

MCENANY: Yes, and we know that the last case against him was dismissed. He got out of that one. But this case apparently is much stronger. You have his wife and him, perhaps at odds. Her case doesn't come until July. So a lot of cards falling there. But it is interesting. This would be kind of the trial of the year, the Bob Menendez case, but it is vastly and largely ignored because everyone is focused on what is happening downtown.

FORD: It was a hung jury I think in the first one.

MCENANY: It was a hung jury, yes.

FORD: And then they decided not to pursue it after that.

MCENANY: That's right.

BAIER: Gold bars, Mercedes, and --

FORD: A lot going on.

PAYNE: If nothing else, he's got at least three Lifetime movies in this one, at least three.

(LAUGHTER)

BAIER: Up next, Secretary of State Antony Blinken's blunt message to Israel.

And then it has been said, golf is a good walk spoiled. We're going to show you some folks who do not subscribe to that.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

ANTONY BLINKEN, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE: Israel has not acted in a manner that's consists with international humanitarian law. A lot of armed Hamas will be left no matter what they do in Rafah. Or if they leave and get out of Gaza, as we believe they need to do, then you're going to have a vacuum, and a vacuum is likely to be filled by chaos, by anarchy, and ultimately by Hamas again.

SEN. PETE RICKETTS, (R-NE) SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE: This just demonstrates their incompetence. Secretary Blinken was talking about how we've got to offer them a better way. A better way like Afghanistan? How well did that work out?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Some harsh criticism. Associated Press writes it this way, Blinken said U.S. -- "Blinken delivers some of the strongest U.S. public criticism of Israel's conduct of the war in Gaza." This was the secretary of state back in October.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANTONY BLINKEN, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE: The message that I bring to Israel is this -- you may be strong enough on your own to defend yourself, but as long as America exists, you will never ever have to. We will always be there by your side.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: So what about this? We are back with the panel. Harold, there is a split here, and it's clear, and it may be hurting the president, isn't it?

FORD: It could be. I would say two things. Two things can be right. In this instance here, I think the administration may have made a mistake not giving them the weapons that they wanted, and I think it's entirely fair for them at the raise the points that are being raised. Israel is going to win this effort. Whether it's tomorrow, whether it's a month, whether it's three months, they are going to win.

In winning, they're going to also have to take on the responsibility in governing an area and governing a group of people, millions of people, who don't want to be under their control and, frankly, I don't think they want them to be under their control.

Furthermore, we're going to need allies in that region to be allies with us in helping to figure out the future.

So I hear what Secretary Blinken is saying, but I think they made a mistake not giving them the weapons and still having this conversation.

BAIER: Kayleigh?

MCENANY: I think a lot of people see foreign policy of confusion, one where words and actions differ, one where in word we are a strong supporter of Israel. But when you read some of the stories out, you read from Peter Baker at "The New York Times" about a call in February where Biden said to Netanyahu, we might have to reconsider our support for the war. You read in the pages of "The Washington Post" this week, the headline, U.S. offers Israel intelligence an effort to avoid Rafah invasion. The intelligence was apparently sensitive intelligence, and you wonder if we are bartering with intelligence that should go to our ally. You look at all of these things, and perhaps pausing support if there is a Rafah invasion. To what degree we don't know, we really don't know --

BAIER: Just analyze that for a second, Charles. "The Washington Post" about the intelligence, the U.S. is "offering Israel valuable assistance in an effort to persuade it to hold back, including sensitive intelligence to help the Israeli military pinpoint the location of Hamas leaders and find the group's hidden tunnels." Why wouldn't we be giving that information at the beginning?

PAYNE: It does not make sense why we would have held it back in the first place. And listen, I'm sure Israel appreciates it, but this is something that they have been doing for a long time. We get back to -- I think we've drifted a long ways from October 7th and the atrocities that happened at that particular moment. And the death toll is sad. But when the Biden administration Israel come up with a formula for how they're not going to hit civilians, that should be a demand nor Hamas, not Israel. Hamas -- we should demand from Hamas how you plan to keep civilians safe, or we could cut to the chase, have these people give themselves up, because, to your point, Israel is going to win this. They are determined to win this because what happened to them was the worst thing that happened to Jewish people on this planet since Adolf Hitler.

BAIER: I wanted to save time for this one soundbite. This is the vice president, this conference today. And we haven't heard from her a lot. Here she is.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KAMALA HARRIS, (D) VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We have to know that sometimes people will open the door for you and leave it open. Sometimes they won't. And then you need to kick that -- door down.

(LAUGHTER)

(APPLAUSE)

HARRIS: Excuse my language.

(LAUGHTER)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: Dropped the f-bomb there at that conference, Harold?

FORD: I don't know -- I haven't seen that. I don't know what that means. But I know this. If someone killed 45,000 Americans, it would be hard- pressed to tell me as an American to tell my government to not to do everything that you can to find our hostages and to show those people and ensure those people don't do it again. So that's why I stand with Israel in this.

BAIER: You don't want to comment about the vice president?

(LAUGHTER)

BAIER: We'll leave it there, we'll leave it there. I got it, I got it.

(LAUGHTER)

BAIER: And finally tonight, a special day.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I found it exhilarating, exhausting, inspiring. I found the short putts really difficult because I was pretty shaky on the greens.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: First time in five years the speed golf pairs championship returned to England. Competitors tried to shoot the lowest score in the shortest amount of time, with both numbers used to determine the total result. Golfers Luke Bone and Luke Willett played 18 holes in what we believe is a world record time of 37 minutes. Wow.

Tomorrow on SPECIAL REPORT, we talk polling and the state of the presidential race with left and right. We're doing it fair, balanced, and unafraid. Thanks for watching. Here's Laura.

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