

# [***Pro-Palestinian Protests Hit Cities Across U.S.; NYPD Chief Of Patrol On Protests Sweeping NYC; Claudia Cowan Live On The Golden Gate Bridge; Iran Sets "New Equation" With Attack On Israel; Anti-Israel Protests Sweep New York City; Trump Trial Begins***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BTD-CYT1-F072-X17X-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News THE STORY WITH MARTHA MACCALLUM 3:00 PM EST

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**Byline:** Martha MacCallum, Bill Melugin, Claudia Cowan, Bret Baier, Leslie Marshall, Nate Foy, Andy McCarthy

**Guests:** John Chell, Shahar Azani, Hugh Hewitt

**Body**

MARTHA MACCALLUM, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Thank you both. Here we go guys. Breaking news this afternoon. I'm Martha MacCallum and this is the story. A stunning look at a now five-hour standoff that has halted all movement on the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco as protesters there have clogged the bridge, and we're now learning more about how they did this. That some of them are chained through the cars.

Because initially, look at this, and say why don't they just arrest everybody? They're obviously endangering the people on the bridge, and they should be taken out of that area. So, we're going to take you live there. And then, look at the left-hand side of your screen. This is getting more and more crowded as I've watched it through the course of the last couple of hours.

Another huge protest of people that are wanting free Palestine and anti- Israel. And they are clogging the Wall Street area this afternoon and we're going to take you there live as well. Look what happened in Chicago. This is O'Hare Airport. Protesters blocked the road on the way into the airport to the extent that passengers had to climb out of their cars and cross the street with their suitcases in order to get into the one of the busiest airports in America to get on their flights.

So, do you think it's a coincidence that this is spanning the entire country, that you've got San Francisco, Chicago, and New York all on the same day? A lot of questions about who's organizing all of this, how paralyzing it is for Americans, and what the outcome of all this will be. These are all developing live situations at this hour. Where this goes, no one knows at this point.

So, we are on it, and we will take you there live to all of these scenes. Now, let's swing over to the Pentagon because we are about to hear a briefing there, and it is a very important one that is about to get underway. As Israel vows that they will answer to Iran's attack over the weekend, more than 300 missiles, attacks on Israel that were largely thwarted, thank goodness for the people of Israel.

President Biden telling Prime Minister Netanyahu, "To slow things down, to think carefully about the risks of escalation in the Middle East. One account reported that he warned the prime minister to just take the win after the missile barrage into Israel this weekend."

Correspondent Bill Melugin reporting live from Los Angeles as we look at what is going on in California. We're going to keep moving around here because we've got a lot of moving stories this hour. Bill, what's the latest?

BILL MELUGIN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Yes, Martha, we are tracking these pro-Palestine, anti- Israel protests really happening in multiple major cities all across the country right now. Getting a word, one just happened in Miami where arrests are underway. You're taking a live look in New York City near Wall Street right now.

This is a protest that has been going on for over an hour now. It's one of the more heated ones we've been watching. A large group of pro-Palestine protesters there. There was a smaller group of pro-Israel counter protesters who were there a short time ago. Things getting heated. We almost saw some punches being thrown a short time ago.

Eventually, NYPD showed up and have now kept those two groups separated. Then you mentioned it, we're also watching out here on the West Coast, those remarkable images up in California's Bay Area, the Golden Gate Bridge. That protest started blocking traffic at 7:30 a.m. Pacific time. So, we're now upwards of four and a half hours of traffic in both directions on the Golden Gate Bridge being shut down.

We just got off the phone with California Highway Patrol a short time ago. They're telling us as of right now, at least seven of those protesters have been arrested, but it could go upwards of 20 people arrested. They're still working on confirming that. They did confirm that those people were chained to vehicles using PVC pipe, at least three vehicles involved.

That's kind of what the holdup has been. Officers trying to get them removed. CHP also confirming these people will be facing a slew of criminal charges, multiple violations of different penal codes. That includes refusals to disperse, blocking the road, and actually a specific California law about blocking bridges.

So, those people will be arrested facing charges. CBP telling us, excuse me, CHP telling us it is legal to protest but not this way. They are saying what these protesters are doing is illegal and "incredibly dangerous". Then, you mentioned what we were watching in Chicago. If we can pull up that video from O'Hare Airport.

People just trying to catch their flights, trying to make it somewhere around the country. The roads were blocked there as well. People getting out of their Ubers and cars with their luggage trying to catch their flights. You're watching what's happening here in New York City. There were also protests happening in San Antonio, Texas.

You're now taking a live look on the left side of your screen at Miami where we are told at least six protesters have been arrested there. We also had a brief protest out here in Southern California at the port of Long Beach. So, we've got six or seven cities across the country now Martha where these synchronized protests have taken place this morning and this afternoon.

The biggest ones obviously being New York City and what we're witnessing on the Golden Gate Bridge and we're seeing law enforcement respond in a different manner in each of these different cities. The Golden Gate Bridge situation CHP is telling us they don't know when that's going to be reopened.

They do not have a timeline for reopening that bridge as they are still trying to figure out how to arrest the folks who have chained themselves to the vehicles. New York City, that pro-Palestine crowd appears to be getting bigger by the minute. Started off as really only a handful of people about an hour and a half ago.

We're not seeing any more of those pro-Israel counter-protests anymore. What we are hearing is a lot of chanting. Over in San Antonio we saw more roads being blocked. Out here in SoCal in Long Beach, we saw people marching the streets before they eventually arrived at a building. That one seemed to simmer down.

So, the two main ones we're watching right now, Martha, live in New York City, and then obviously the situation at the Golden Gate Bridge where traffic is backed up pretty much as far as the eye can see and has been for several hours as law enforcement is trying to figure out how to take those people into custody and eventually get traffic reopened. We'll send it back to you.

MACCALLUM: Incredible. Bill, thank you very much. Bill Melugin reporting from Los Angeles. Joining me now on the phone is NYPD Chief of Patrol John Chell. John, Chief, very good to have you with us back on the program. Thank you so much for being here. Can you give us a sense, Chief, of what's going on downtown, in Manhattan, right now and what your forces are able to do to keep an eye on the situation? Are they concerned that this will get volatile? It looks fairly peaceful but very crowded.

JOHN CHELL, NYPD CHIEF OF PATROL: So, right now we have 16 protests planned for today. We've already cleared up about five of them. We've been on high alert since this morning with our bridges and tunnel crossings for what's happening around the country. And we will stay in that posture until later on tonight. We've got some added resources that are being held over. We have our aviation in the air.

We have our joint operations center ready to go. In terms of the protests right now down by Wall Street, we have a couple hundred so far is peaceful. This kind of stationary at the right now. And then we have about 60, 70 protesters going on at the Trump grand jury proceedings right now. So, we're ready. We've been ready. We've anticipated today. And so far, so good, New York City.

MACCALLUM: Chief, I just want to let everybody at home listen to the sounds of this protest. We have a live shot. Let's just listen for a few seconds here and we'll come back to the chief. Chief, you hear a little bit of what they're saying there. We heard the Palestinian protesters early, and they were saying "Israel bombs, U.S. pays, how many kids did you kill today? Genocide Joe has got to go." And they go on to say, "Israel, go to hell." Their signs say, "Israel is responsible for 75 years of bloodshed."

How do you instruct your officers in this situation to keep the peace, and obviously, this is very disruptive for anybody who's working in that area - - businesses in that area, how do you juggle all that Chief?

CHELL: Well, we've been dealing with this since October 7th. So, we're well-versed in this. Cops are well changed, well-trained. Our response groups are well-trained. So, we just tell to, you know, keep the peace, be neutral, and respect the first amendment, OK. But under no circumstances to the best of our ability are we going to allow any lawless behavior as it extends to breaking property, assaulting people, and blocking traffic, well, we can make those arrests. So, they do it well, they're well-trained, they've been dealing this since October 7th and we're used to it.

MACCALLUM: Chief, do you have a sense, you said that you were, basically you had intelligence that was around 16 protests were coming. You said five of them have been cleared so far. What is your sense of who's organizing all of this?

CHELL: It varies every day. It could be different groups representing, you know, their own group. There could be students, there could be schools, there could be larger, larger organizations, there could be a Tax Day protest. So, like I said, we have 16 of them. They vary, but we track them very well through our intelligence bureau and we usually stay ahead of them and we know what they're trying to do.

MACCALLUM: What's your, what would you tell to people in terms of how safe New York City is in this environment?

CHELL: When it comes to protests, New York is a tough resilience. We've been doing this since October 7th and beyond. We have the best police department in the world and we're going to do the best we can to keep them safe, to keep it moving, keep traffic flowing, and try to inconvenience them as least as possible. But it is tough for us to do, but we get it done.

MACCALLUM: Chief, thank you very much. Chief of Patrol John Chell. We're going to thank you very much, Chief. Good to have you here.

CHELL: No problem, Martha.

MACCALLUM: We'll see you soon, I hope. Thank you very much.

CHELL: Thank you. Bye-bye.

MACCALLUM: Let's go to the Pentagon. Jennifer Griffin is asking a question to Brigadier General Pat Ryder. Let's listen in.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BRIG. GEN. PAT RYDER, DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE PRESS SECRETARY: We were not given specifics by Iran, and to my knowledge, any specifics in terms of exact times, dates. You know, we obviously have a robust intelligence network that provides indications and warning, but to answer your specific question, no, Iran did not tell us when and where they were going to attack.

JENNIFER GRIFFIN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL PENTAGON CORRESPONDENT: And just in terms of the, is the U.S. concerned that U.S. forces in the region would be in jeopardy if Israel retaliates for Saturday night? And is that why the U.S. is not participating in a potential retaliation?

RYDER: Well, look, I don't want to get into hypotheticals at this point. Whether or not Israel responds to Iran's attack, of course, is something for Israel to discuss and to decide. As Secretary Austin has said both publicly and privately, we don't want to see escalation, but we obviously will take necessary measures to protect our forces in the region. And as was demonstrated over the weekend, we'll take necessary measures to defend Israel. Thank you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think officials have said last week that additional U.S. assets, military assets, have been sent to the region. Are those assets still in place or have they been moved out now?

RYDER: As of right now, those assets are still in place.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You talked previously about Iran not seeking conflict with the United States. Is that still accurate? Do you today believe that Iran is not seeking conflict with the United States or Israel?

RYDER: Are you asking me if Iran is speaking? I'm not going to speak for Iran. I mean, certainly from the United States, we do not seek conflict with Iran.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: -- conflict before. Today, is that statement still accurate?

RYDER: Yes, again, I'm not going to speak for Iran. Thanks. Will?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Two questions on the Middle East. Has Israel informed the Pentagon if it plans to respond to the Iranian attack? And does DOD have any message on a potential response in terms to Israel? Second, given the number of drones and missiles that were shot down, is the Pentagon concerned about stocks of either U.S. or Israeli air defense munitions in the region?

RYDER: Yes, thanks Will. So, on your first question, again I'm not going to speak for Israel or any potential response. Again, that's a decision for them to make. As we demonstrated this weekend, we remain focused on the defense of Israel and on the protection of U.S. forces that are in the region.

And we've been clear from the very beginning that we don't want to see a wider regional war, and we continue to work hard in consulting with our partners and our allies throughout the region to ensure that there is not a larger regional war.

And then on your other question, again, I'm not going to get into the specifics in terms of U.S. and partner readiness levels. Again, as we demonstrated this weekend, we have the capability and the capacity to defend Israel and to defend our forces in the region.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Thank you, General. I have two questions. How critical was --

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: We'll keep a close eye on the Pentagon briefing. With me now is Shahar Azani, former Israeli diplomat and former Spokesperson for the Israeli consulate here in New York. Shahar, welcome back. Good to have you with us today. Your reaction first to these protests that you see in very large numbers across the country today.

SHAHAR AZANI, FORMER ISRAELI DIPLOMAT: Well, they are both obscene and absurd, and I think to myself, Martha, are they protesting the fact that the 9-month-old baby was abducted from his bed and has been held in captivity by Hamas for over six months? Is this what's troubling them? Because if not, then I'm looking for humanity out there where there is watermelon.

MACCALLUM: So, you see what's on their signs. They blame Israel for 75 years of bloodshed.

AZANI: It's more than just the signage. It's the fact that they're calling out rightly for the annihilation of the Jewish state. Its ignorant calls like from the river to the sea that send out this message that Jews don't have a state. So, these people who supposedly protest genocide are calling for it.

MACCALLUM: Talk to me a little bit about what we just heard at the Pentagon briefing in terms of the communication between Israel and the United States. There was some reporting that General Austin, the secretary of defense, indicated that the United States had no heads up around the understood Israeli strike and Damascus that took out -- that some of the leadership of the Iranian IRGC.

Is that something that the United States, given our relationship should have been made aware of?

AZANI: Well, you know, the fact that Iran has been playing a negative role throughout the Middle East, using its agent to instigate this violence and terror against Israel, but also against American forces is a given fact.

I can't relate to a specific incident that you have just mentioned, whether it was Israel or somebody else. But the fact is that the Iranian regime must understand that there is no immunity or impunity for its act of terror, originally. That specific general and those teams were working on instigating more violence in the regions of Judea and Samaria, bringing in and funding more weapons into that area. So, that what we're seeing in Gaza and the destruction that Hamas has brought Palestinians there will spread. We will not allow this, nor should the U.S.

MACCALLUM: With regard to President Biden, as, you know, saying, don't, is that strong enough language to Iran? Because obviously, they are. And they did.

AZANI: They did. They did. And what United States did in words must follow with deeds, because the Iranian regime does not react, the kind words and pats on the wrist. What the message that needs to be sent is a powerful message.

And only through that powerful message of the threat of using force, will you see the Iranian regime recoil. They will not back off just because of words. Now, we've seen what's happening in Israel is an excellent defensive operation. But we know that defense is not enough.

Israel has defended itself against Hamas's missiles for 17 years with a successful Iron Dome. And we still got the October 7th massacre. Same will happen with Iran. We will be excellent in defense, but the Iranian regime needs to know that we will be just as good if not more in offence.

MACCALLUM: All right. So, what's the offensive plan at this point, given your background, working with the Israeli government. There's been, you know, the message from the White House appears to be take the win, according to one report in the conversation between President Biden and Prime Minister Netanyahu, like, you know, settle down. Let's end this now. Let's not see a retaliation from Israel. What's going to happen?

AZANI: Well, once there is a win, I've know that Israel will take it. But Israel has always been very creative in its way of interactions with the Islamic Republic. We have seen Iran active in a multitude of arenas and Israel is ready, willing and able to strike at the Iranian forces wherever and whenever it deems appropriate.

And I think we shouldn't add any anything further and allow the Iranians to play their own guessing game.

MACCALLUM: We are watching this live shot in New York City see, you know, really Americans of all different backgrounds, in this crowd: old, young, black, white, Hispanic, Asian, all kinds of people out there, supporting the Palestinian cause. What goes through your mind when you see that.

AZANI: Very simple. I -- what I what we've seen so far, not just in the U.S., but in the West is a majority support for Israel, but a silent majority and a minority support for terror, but a very vocal minority.

We've been here in this very studio, when those masses -- the pro-terror masses attacked Thanksgiving. They have launched an attack over Christmas. And as long as they stand there in support of terror, unable to utter one denunciation of the captivity of babies, decapitation of babies, and execution of ordinary citizens, then, these have no legitimacy. They are nothing more than useful idiots, Martha.

MACCALLUM: What will it take to reach some kind of agreement to get the remaining hostages, and it's absolutely heartbreaking, the numbers that we're hearing about how many may even be left, there were should be over 100 left. But apparently, Hamas can't come up with 40 people to return at this point.

AZANI: Right.

MACCALLUM: What do you learning on that?

AZANI: Well, according to the answer, barely 20. It just tells us the kind of torture and torment that these poor hostages are going through. And Israel has gone more than just the extra mile to trying to get the hostages out, willing to make considerable concessions. But clearly Hamas is unwilling to settle for anything aside from their maximalist demands, which Israel won't give.

So, at the same time, we have to understand that we must have our hostages out, and we will do so in whatever way we can. But Hamas need to be willing to concede to a deal. And as long as they see pressure coming mounting on Israel from the outside, they won't concede to any deal.

MACCALLUM: You know, that the posture from the White House has been, you know, our hands are not on any of this, and we will not support a retaliation by Israel at this point. What do you make of that?

AZANI: Well, it's -- the fact is that Iranian forces have been attacking us forces for so many years, including in recent months. The American response of looking the other way and claiming that it's not raining, that won't work.

And the Iranians understand very well, that language of appeasement, which is not going to go very well with the -- with what's happening in the Middle East and with safety of the American forces. Only a strong stand against Iran can win this game.

MACCALLUM: What about the safety of people in Israel at this point, because Iran has made it clear that they now look at this differently. They are at a new level of engagement, because they are firing missiles from Iran into the country of Israel.

They say we're -- this is a new chapter.

AZANI: And if they are allowed to do so with impunity, then the people of Israel and the world will be at much more risk. We have to stand up to this evil in order to stop it. We won't be able to stop it by appeasing it, Martha.

MACCALLUM: All right. We're watching these protests as they continue to grow and, you know, it is -- it -- did you ever think that you would see this day in America?

AZANI: I am telling you, this is actually disappointing, heartbreaking. Because to me, when I hear those chants, I'm only thinking about the pain and suffering. By the way if not just Israelis, think about the Palestinians who are suffering and Hamas bringing them to this.

People are calling this pro-Palestinian? Pro-Palestinian is deposing Hamas, not supporting Hamas.

MACCALLUM: You know, you think about the shift that we have seen, you know, so quickly, really. And you look at what's happening in the election. Are you concerned that President Biden is acting out of fear with regard to the -- with regard to the election in Michigan and places like that?

AZANI: Well, I sure -- I sure -- I sure hope not. The backbone will resonate well with voters. And what we are seeing now, and exactly as you said, Martha, I'm shocked and amazed. I couldn't believe it myself. I thought that the understanding of the situation would last beyond 24 hours. But the fact is you right, we've seen this kind of obscene behavior, even a day after the massacre. But we will not forget --

MACCALLUM: Shahar, thank you very much. Good to have you with us today.

AZANI: Always a pleasure. Thank you, Martha.

MACCALLUM: Thank you for joining us.

Let's go to senior correspondent Claudia Cowan, who is live at the Golden Gate Bridge right now, with a look at what is happening there. Looks like some cars are actually moving at this point, Claudia. What's going on?

CLAUDIA COWAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL SENIOR CORRESPONDENT: Yes, they are. At least in the southbound direction on the 101 Freeway, crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. Traffic here on the other side of the freeway, they are opening just moments ago, and I'm told the northbound direction behind me is about to open momentarily.

This is certainly a quite a sight here seeing this freeway, at least on the northbound side completely empty of cars, they are stacked up on the other side in San Francisco. But at least, let me show you the southbound direction is finally moving. This long backup of cars, finally going through. There were fleets at the front of this huge crowd of vehicles with their lights going in their sirens going and that was the escort to get these cars that have been waiting nearly five hours across the span and into San Francisco.

So, a long morning, I can tell you just looking at the faces of some of these people in the cars, frustration. Yes, and concern. Many have missed important events, many have kids in their cars, and they are glad to be moving again.

Now, the bridge -- oh, here comes the first northbound cars, Martha. So, this are good news for these cars that not many of them yet. Maybe they all come down to one lane. It's unclear from this end. But we also have bikers able to cross the iconic span as well. So good news, as this protest appears to be wrapping up. We've got at least a dozen arrests, maybe more to come.

Here comes another couple of cars in the different bound direction. So, it looks like the protests here on the Golden Gate Bridge is finally coming to an end. A very long Monday, morning. Martha.

MACCALLUM: Yes. Claudia, what is it like for people who were in the situation? You know, is it possible to -- I mean, you can't really turn around and go around -- I mean, they were absolutely stuck, right? There is not a lot of alternative routes.

COWAN: You know, we saw a couple of cars near the back of the -- of the backup, turn around, and head back the other way.

I'm going to stop over here because cars are coming by now pretty quickly. But again, you just had to feel for those folks just stuck in their cars, they really had nowhere to go. They were trap for many, many hours.

What I think a lot of people will be wanting to know is whether those first couple of rows of cars were actually part of the protests. And at this point, it appears as though they were. So, it remains to be seen if any of these arrests end up going to prosecution. We're still waiting to see what happened with the protesters who blocked the Bay Bridge during APEC last November.

But obviously, a lot of inconvenience today and number of laws broken, but it appears that things are moving smoothly now, which is --

MACCALLUM: Good news. Claudia, thank you very much. We are, you know, getting used to seeing these situations all over. The situation in New York is still pretty crowded and loud at this point. So, we're keeping a close eye on that camera as well.

These pro-Palestinian protests that have been sweeping the country as President Biden tells Iran, don't, Tehran does.

With 300 missiles fired over the weekend. Bret Baier is next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: All right. Welcome back, everybody.

A flood wall of Wall Street in Gaza -- for Gaza, I should say, demonstration here in New York City. These are some of the side streets in New York City, we saw an enormous crowd down in the more open Wall Street area.

People seem to be moving towards that crowd in these images in this video that you're watching right now. There is a live shot in downtown Manhattan.

Meanwhile, the White House is now responding to Iran in defiance of President Biden's warning, don't. It didn't work. In terms of attacking Israel. Watch this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REAR ADM. JOHN KIRBY (RET.), COORDINATOR FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS, NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL: And so, let's talk about --

(CROSSTALK)

PETER DOOCY, FOX NEWS CHANNEL WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: Yes. Does he said, don't, and they did it anyway? So, now what?

KIRBY: And let's talk about what we did, Peter.

Let's talk about don't and did. Let's talk about Saturday night.

Yes, they fired an unprecedent amount of munitions. But how much of a success did they have, Peter? None. Zero.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: An emboldened Iran, obviously treating things quite differently now.

Saying that they, "have decided to create a new equation" in the Middle East. These are very important words.

Any Israeli attack on their interests will be met with direct retaliation and unprecedented attack, which we saw over the weekend, fired from Iran to the homeland in Israel.

Let's bring in Bret Baier, Fox News chief political anchor and executive editor, and anchor of SPECIAL REPORT. Bret, great to have you with us.

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL ANCHOR: Hi, Martha.

MACCALLUM: When Iranian leadership says that they have a whole new equation for the Middle East, this is a sign that obviously things are shaking up.

BAIER: 100 percent. And, listen, let's think about what was said from the White House. They were touting the success of the Iron Dome, the success of FA-15 strike Eagles by the US and Brits, and the Jordanians. That's all true. And they shot down 99% of these 300 plus projectiles, cruise missiles, ballistic missiles, drones.

However, think about what those were all meant to do, what was the attack supposed to do. It was supposed to get through that defense and kill X number of Israelis to do a lot of damage. And it's not being talked about that this was a pretty unprecedented event in the Middle East. It is not like a strategic strike that takes out a leader here or a leader there. It is not like taking out a facility. It is a bombardment that fortunately was stopped, but is unprecedented.

And the fact that the Iranians are now saying they want to change the equation is daunting.

MACCALLUM: Yes, it sure is. And, you know, some of the commentary around this that suggested, just as you're alluding to, Bret, that like, oh, well, obviously it was just sort of a big show of force. You know, they didn't really mean it and now this is over. I think is stunning given the, you know, we'd hear a lot about the power of the new ballistic missile system that Iran has now, that it's the largest system they've ever had. Thankfully, a lot of them failed.

But, you know, they have an unleashed amount of money now thanks to this sanctions relief that clearly they're putting to work. Is that the way that you see it and people you talk to see it, Bret?

BAIER: Yes, I talked to a lot of people today. And it's true that the missile system was not good. I mean, half of them either didn't launch or they blew up before they reached their intended target. The drones are a new way in which they have suicide drones that they attack. We've seen them in Ukraine, we've seen them used by Russia. They are Iranian. And there's a drone factory actually in the western part of Iran, which potentially would be an interesting target for either the Israelis or the US should they had decided to do that.

But there is a sense that Iran's not going to give up, that this isn't just 350 projectiles and suddenly they're done. This is, you know, the first. And how Israel responds and how the US responds to Israel's response, I think is the next step in this entire back and forth.

MACCALLUM: I just want to quickly read a quote from the Washington Post this morning. Iran crosses all the red lines and sets a new equation. I'm sorry, that's not it. It's actually the Wall Street Journal Editorial Board. White House theories of escalation management don't work against a regime that thinks a US president fears escalation more than Iran does. US restraint since October 7th massacre has encouraged Tehran to see how much more it can get away with. I'm going to leave people with that thought.

You know what, Bret, stay with me for a moment. This is a Hezbollah flag that we're seeing on the screen. These anti-Israel protests in New York City are growing. The shot that we were just showing you moments ago is a large group of people heading towards the Brooklyn Bridge now.

You know, these protesters are speaking in pretty specific terms here, Bret, about a very different American policy that they want to see President Biden under pressure here to, you know, he's in a rock in hard place with our old ally, Israel, and the political pressures that are clear.

BAIER: And he's trying to tiptoe through the ***politics*** of this. And it is not working on either side really from what we've seen politically. Obviously, these folks are really upset from the left. There's no talk about the onus being on Hamas. The fact that ceasefire negotiations have been turned down by Hamas for the last two times, that the hostages, they have not proved -- have a proof of life of how many hostages are left. There's nothing about that.

And yet, the President and the administration is really trying to have it both ways. It's a lot tougher in the wake of what happened over the weekend. It is a lot more difficult on the left side of this equation as a result of what happened on Saturday.

MACCALLUM: What do you think the impact is, Bret, as we sit here about six plus months from the election? You saw President Trump at the rally over the weekend in Pennsylvania. This would not have happened. This weakness is unbelievable on the part of President Biden.

BAIER: Listen, he's used that numerous times. I don't know if that's provable. I think that there are a lot of people that support him who believe that to be true. I do think that this issue is really a political negative for President Biden. And the sense that you get by how they're acting, and how they're reacting and kind of tiptoeing through the rhetoric, gives you a sense of how dangerous they think it is politically in swing states like Michigan, like Pennsylvania. And you're seeing, you know, these protests that are growing, and they are pointed at one person, and that is President Biden.

So it'll be fascinating to see. I do want to end with this in that, you know, the budget that they put forward, they're touting all of this success of the Iron Dome and missile defense. But the budget they put forward for the Pentagon takes out half a billion dollars in missile defense for the US. So that's an interesting thing for both Democrats and Republicans who want to see more spend on those kind of things.

MACCALLUM: Well, some of these events make people perhaps a little bit more clear eyed as they look at the future and the threats that we may face. We will see where they go with that. Bret, thank you very much. I'll see you later tonight.

BAIER: I'll see you.

MACCALLUM: "Special Report" panel, it's coming up tonight, all right. So these protesters here in New York City marching across the Brooklyn Bridge, you saw the other protesters who were going down into the subway on their way toward the Brooklyn Bridge demanding an end to the war in Gaza which, of course, Hamas could do if they turned over the hostages. And this could end tomorrow potentially. And as Bret just pointed out, they have shot down the last two agreements that were made very -- that large efforts were made on, so we had protesters in Chicago, at O'Hara, this morning.

We see them on the Golden Gate Bridge. They're cheering Iran on in its attacks against Israel. Hugh Hewitt and Leslie Marshall next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: All right. Pro-Palestinian protesters now reaching the Brooklyn Bridge in New York City, you saw them all over the Golden State. You see all these cars just trying to get where they're going. Let's take -- go back to that tight shot, guys, the live shot of New York City.

So these folks are trying to drive in and out of Manhattan, and they are basically being surrounded by protesters on both sides of their cars as they sit there and wait to try to get off of this bridge. Got to be a bit unsettling for the people in these cars, especially having seen the huge crowds that we saw downtown. So then somebody sent word we're going to the bridge. You heard Chief Chell moments ago, I was speaking with him, the chief of patrol in Manhattan.

They're spraying something green towards these cars, towards the windows of these cars. Now you see them running. This has to be a very unsettling experience for the people who are in these cars right now trying to get in and out of New York City, a very tough situation. Chief Chell said that they had a heads up that there could be as many as 16 protests in Manhattan today. He said they were able to disperse about five of them.

Now you see it looks like law enforcement coming through these roads in between the cars here on the Brooklyn Bridge, running some of them. This is a very tough situation for New York's law enforcement. They've seen a lot of that in recent weeks and months.

Let's bring in Hugh Hewitt and Leslie Marshall, who are standing by. Let's go to Bill Mallusion -- Bill Melugin, I should say, first, who is reporting on all of this live from Los Angeles. Hi, Bill.

MELUGIN: Yes, Martha. Good afternoon to you. We've now seen these pro- Palestine protests breaking out on two of America's most iconic bridges today. We had the Golden Gate Bridge earlier, now you are watching these live images out of New York City on the Brooklyn Bridge, where you can see dozens, potentially maybe even hundred or so of these anti-Israel protesters have gathered in our purposely trying to impede traffic there.

Take a look at the left side of your screen. The Brooklyn Bridge has a pedestrian walkway. Looks like things are getting a little physical right now. It looks like some of those bike officers are trying to make a few arrests there. The crowd is now running further down the bridge. But you see the people watching from above, up on the left. That is a pedestrian walkway where you can walk down the Brooklyn Bridge if you'd like to. These activists, these protesters have decided, no, we don't want to do that. We want to block traffic instead.

So what you see the officers in the neon shirts? Those are bike officers obviously trying to either shoo them off of the bridge or start taking some folks into custody. And you can see they're trying to get away from those officers now.

And, Martha, we had the live shot earlier. Somebody had a Hezbollah flag walking around there. That is remarkable to see a Hezbollah flag being paraded around the streets of Manhattan. That's not something I don't think anybody would expect to see. But that's the climate we're in these days. And you can see these officers trying to break up what they can here on the Brooklyn Bridge.

We'll keep these live pictures up the Golden Gate Bridge on the west coast, the San Francisco Bay Area, that has now reopened after it was closed down in both directions for the better part of five hours after protesters there chain themselves to cars to impede traffic. CHP California -- OK, you're seeing those officers going in there trying to make some of those arrests. They're yanking people out one by one. And we saw dozens of those officers, so it looks like they're going to try to peel people off the back of this protest as much as they can, or at least to try to get them moving to the other side of the bridge.

Obviously, I'm sure some of them have been seeing those live images out of California today with the Golden Gate Bridge, where traffic was at a standstill for five hours. They don't want that to happen there. So you can see NYPD and these law enforcement officers here taking a much more active approach to getting these folks off the bridge. And you can see other people just going about their day on that pedestrian walkway, looking down below them at what is going on.

So, Martha, you mentioned it earlier, we've been seeing these protests, really, in a synchronized way, breaking out in major cities all across the country today. I'll name some of them off. We obviously had the San Francisco Area with the Golden Gate Bridge, we got New York City right now, we had Chicago earlier, O'Hare Airport being blocked, people having to get out of their vehicles with their luggage and walk their way into the airport. We had, just a short time ago, Miami, seven people arrested there for trying to block traffic. We had San Antonio, Texas. We had Philadelphia. We had a brief one out here in Southern California in Long Beach a short time ago. And about an hour ago in Eugene, Oregon, Interstate 5, another major freeway blocked by protesters there as well. So you're seeing a little map of everything that's going on here.

It's unclear if these protesters on Brooklyn Bridge are part of the same group that were over by Wall Street earlier today. We saw some of them branch off into what looked like the subway. So it looks like there's different groups or one big group that is branching off into different areas to try to impede people's commutes as much as possible today. But at least here in New York City, we're seeing those bike officers really shooing them off the bridge as fast as they can to where they haven't really been able to stand in one spot and shut everything down in both directions, like what were seeing in California.

As you continue watching in New York City, we can report in California with the Golden Gate Bridge, CHP, California Highway Patrol, telling us they arrested over a dozen people and that, yes, it is illegal to block traffic and block traffic on a bridge. They said they'll be facing a slew of criminal charges. And they said, yes, you are able to protest in the United States but not like this. They said what happened on the Golden Gate Bridge was illegal and "incredibly dangerous."

So now we continue to see this playing out on the other coast, New York City, as these protesters now appear to be hopping a center divider or a K- rail as they move down the Brooklyn Bridge there. But, Martha, it's remarkable to watch these officers at least taking a much more proactive approach compared to what we've been seeing on the Golden Gate Bridge. And it looks like they're able to get these people shoot off in a much swifter way.

MACCALLUM: Absolutely, Bill. Thank you very much. Some stunning scenes as we saw them basically rushing towards this crowd of protesters and as Bill said, peeling some of them off. We don't know how many arrests may have taken place on the Brooklyn Bridge, but they got the signal. We saw a lot of them moving from the Wall Street protests, then making their way down to the subway system that had Brooklyn Bridge, you know, right over the staircase on their way to this protest. It's a really beautiful day in New York, and a lot of folks have gathered for these.

It's also the day when we have the Trump trial getting underway. It's not all that far from the Brooklyn Bridge. You can take a quick peek at this map. It shows you the distance from the Brooklyn Bridge to where the Trump courthouse is.

So let's bring in our panel here. We have Hugh Hewitt, nationally syndicated radio show host, and Leslie Marshall, democratic strategist and Fox News contributor. Great to have you both with us.

Hugh, let me start with you. I'm struck by a few things watching this. These protesters have a very specific goal. They call out the president, Joe Biden, on a daily basis. They call him Genocide Joe. They want him to end his support for Israel, and they are coming out in force. And then I think about the fact that, I think it was about 50 members of Congress signed a letter, including Nancy Pelosi, saying that because of what was happening in Gaza, they did not support continued weapons sales to Israel.

So is this protest effort, Hugh, is it working?

HUGH HEWITT, NATIONALLY SYNDICATED RADIO SHOW HOST: I think it is, Martha, and good afternoon to you and Leslie. I do think it is working because of the White House's response to the unprecedented attack on Israel on Saturday night. And I do believe the response to the White House was to try and get Israel not to respond. And that's direct response to this, which is a preview of coming actually like a long trailer for the Chicago Convention the Democrats are going to put on in Chicago in August. All these folks are going to go there.

The good news, Martha, they're not in the Trump jury pool, so I'm glad about that. The other good news, everybody in their car, everybody watching at home is more and more moving towards putting Trump in the fall as they watch the collapse border. The bad news is, I don't know how ignorant these people are, Hamas or Hezbollah is, but it's got to be fairly ignorant because I can't imagine any American in their right mind marching for terrorism.

MACCALLUM: Leslie, you know, the same thought struck me. We saw a Hezbollah flag in this group, Hamas and Hezbollah. Hamas must look back at October 7th and then look at today and say, you know what, we're getting exactly what we wanted. It's working in America. What do you think?

LESLIE MARSHALL, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, a few things. You know, the majority of the people that are marching are not saying death to America, are not carrying Hezbollah flags or Hamas flags, which I would agree with you that nobody should be. One of the things that makes our nation great is that you can't say you hate. You can't say death to America and not be killed yourself. But, you know, any American, in my opinion, should be really grateful that we have that type of freedom.

And nobody should support any terrorist organizations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, or any terrorist organization for that matter. Just like on January 6 when we saw a guillotine, you know, people, you know, just shock. It's riveting. But the majority of people are being peaceful. I don't like, personally, and it is illegal in some places are for people to obstruct traffic. And I don't think it's effective. I would disagree with you there. I don't think it's effective.

We've seen climate, you know, science, you know, supporters do that on my side of the aisle, you know, we've seen election deniers on the other side of the aisle, the list goes on. It's not effective. What's effective is voting. Protesting can be effective. But if you get a bunch of people angry or just trying to get to and from work, or home, that's not going to help your cause.

And the people that you're obstructing the traffic with aren't the legislators who make those decisions. They're not Congress House or Senate, they're not Joe Biden. So I don't agree that's effective. I think it's effective in getting people arrested, getting headlines. We're talking about it, but it doesn't reach the goal they want. The goal they want and many support it, you know, I do -- as well -- not as well in Hamas. Let me be very clear.

But, you know, to have the hostages come home, to have some type of a ceasefire because we're getting to the point of famine in Gaza and the thousands of people that died. The majority of those victims are women and children, and something has to be done. We can't be going in this direction continually. It's not working.

MACCALLUM: You know, Hugh, it's always struck me that the heinous, brutal nature of the October 7th attack was intentional because it provoked an enormous response, right, in Gaza. And now it has provoked further divisions by the biggest supporter of Israel, the United States, and we see that happening across the country. Your thoughts on that?

HEWITT: Well, I think it's unwise for people to speak out on behalf of anything to do with Hamas. I think it's unwise for these demonstrators to be showing any kind of support for them because Sinwar is watching this (inaudible) and supporters of Hamas are watching from their various (inaudible) in Gaza. Hezbollah is watching, the Ayatollah Khomeini is watching. And they think they're winning. They don't understand that this is not a representative group of Americans and, more importantly, club appeasement over at the White House where they're urging Israel not to respond.

They're watching and they are politically scared to death. They are afraid these people are going to Chicago and they are going to Chicago. They are afraid that gas prices are going to go up because when Israel strikes Iran, they're going to actually impact oil supplies and that the president's in a political bind, I understand why they want everyone to go back, but it isn't going to happen with this kind of thing going on.

MACCALLUM: OK. Leslie Marshall, Hugh Hewitt, great to talk to both of you. Thank you so much for joining me today. Good to see you both.

So correspondent Nate Foy is in New York, not far from where these protests are happening. Nate, are you with us?

NATE FOY, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: I'm with you, Martha. Yes. And we've seen protesters here both for and against former President Trump as well, so a very busy day in Manhattan. But a quick update as far as what's happening in the first criminal case ever involving a former US president.

So the questioning of prospective jurors has begun. One woman from Harlem was just excused after answering questions about whether she can serve impartially. She said that she has strong opinions about former President Trump, so she was let go. About 50 people of 96 prospective jurors were also let go for similar reasons.

We also heard that next Tuesday, Judge Juan Merchan will hear oral arguments about possible sanctions related to a possible gag order violation. Former President Trump is not supposed to talk about any witnesses in the case. He did post on social media about former lawyer, Michael Cohen. Prosecutors say Trump violated the gag order three separate times, including in his post about Cohen. And they want $1,000 fines for each of those cases. So that would be a total of $3,000.

Separately, Judge Merchan ruled that Cohen's previous pleading guilty for federal campaign finance violations does not prove former President Trump's guilt. Cohen's credibility will be a major issue throughout the trial as well. The judge ruled the 2016 Access Hollywood tape cannot be played in court. However, Martha, Judge Merchan ruled that evidence related to payments made to former Playboy model, Karen McDougal, will be allowed at trial.

But first things first, a jury needs to be picked, the prospective jurors who will make it through the initial phase after they hear about pretty much just the basics of the case, they'll be asked a series of 42 questions. Those questions will not explicitly ask any of them who they voted for in 2020, who they plan on voting for coming up in November.

But the questions will detail their background and any possible affiliations or connections both for and against former President Trump. So that is what is underway right now once this short break ends. Former President Trump just left the courtroom. He did not say anything to reporters as he did this morning. And he once again came after President Joe Biden, who he says is weaponizing the Department of Justice to interfere with the presidential election. Listen to the former president earlier.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES AND PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: This is an assault on our country, and it's a country that's failing. It's a country that's run by an incompetent man who's very much involved in this case. This is really an attack on a political opponent.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So, Martha, court is expected to wrap up here at 430. We'll see if former president Trump has something else to say when court ends for the day. The trial is expected to last roughly a month and a half, so he'll need to balance running for president and being here in person, as is required for a criminal matter in court. But, man, you see those live images here in New York City and that juxtaposed with what's happening here at the courthouse. Police certainly have their hands full, which they normally do, unfortunately, here in New York City, but today even more so than others, Martha.

MACCALLUM: Yes, that's for sure. Nate, thank you very much. We were just watching on the right hand side of the screen a number of arrests being made. They look -- it looked like they handcuffed a few people and they were standing against the wall there. And now you see them trying to break up this crowd, but they're clearly taking some people into custody, these police officers in New York on the Brooklyn Bridge.

Let's bring in Andy McCarthy, former federal prosecutor and Fox News contributor. Andy, good to have you here.

ANDY MCCARTHY, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Thanks, Martha.

MACCALLUM: I do want to ask you about this Trump courtroom beginning today, the trial beginning today. This jury selection process, we're just watching a whole bunch of New Yorkers in action here on the right hand side of the screen. Can they put together an unbiased jury in this case, Andy?

MCCARTHY: Yes. I think it'll take a long time but I like Manhattan jurors. But watching your split screen, Martha, I have to say, in 1995, I tried terrorists in a courthouse about three minutes away from the Brooklyn Bridge. And we played a tape where they said if the battalions of jihad would do three or four operations like they did to the marines in Lebanon, talking about Hezbollah, America would leave the region. And the jury audibly gassed.

So, how you go from that to Hezbollah flags in Lower Manhattan is just -- it's a cultural tragedy actually to watch it.

MACCALLUM: Yes. I mean, you know, this is not far from the site of the World Trade Center.

MCCARTHY: Right.

MACCALLUM: It's not far from the case that you just pointed out that you worked on with the first attempt at the Twin towers where an explosive was blown up in the parking garage and killed people in that situation. And now we are living in an environment where you have a lot of people who are promoting some of these groups.

Now, most of these people are talking about the Palestinian people. But as we said, we're seeing Hamas flags, Hezbollah flags. This is Oakland, California that we're seeing here. Andy, as you watch, you know, all of this, thoughts on how this is coordinated or if it's coordinated?

MCCARTHY: Well, I think it's absolutely coordinated. And the reason is that, you know, you have Muslim brotherhood organizations that have been planting their flag in the United States since the middle 1960s, particularly the Muslim students associations. And if you let that go on for 60 years and watch it metastasize, and then you decide in addition to that to basically obliterate your border so all the crazies can come in and find each other. You can't be too surprised that we have a situation. I mean, it's infuriating but it's not all that surprising.

MACCALLUM: It's kind of rich, right? Then you've got this courtroom situation where the former president is on trial for something that most observers look at. They say, well, how is this misdemeanor now a felony and an election violation by a local prosecutor, how is that even happening? But he's going to be in the courtroom till June, Andy, as they try to find him guilty on this stuff, as you watch what else is going on in Manhattan. It's kind of crazy.

MCCARTHY: Yes. He's going to be in this courtroom till June, and then they'll have another courtroom and probably another forum to be in after that.

MACCALLUM: It's really stunning. And this is the America that we find ourselves in as we head towards the election, a presidential election of 2024, lot for folks across the nation to sort out and listen to, and think about. Andy McCarthy, my thanks to you for joining us this afternoon.

Here's another standoff between Palestinian protesters and police officers, this one in Oakland, California. We will have continuing coverage throughout the day on Fox News. I will see you back here for the continuation of "The Story" tomorrow at 3:00 and on "Special REPORT" tonight.

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