

# [***Interview with Nikki Haley (R), Presidential Candidate***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B6V-T8V1-JCS1-60KX-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

JOHN ROBERTS, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: All right, Sandra, let's get some thoughts on all of this from Republican presidential candidate Nikki Haley.

Governor, thank you so much for joining with us today.

I want to play a little more of what John Kirby had to say in the wake of this latest attack earlier. Listen here.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN KIRBY, NSC COORDINATOR FOR STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS: I certainly can't deny the fact that there have been a series of attacks now, increasingly lethal, over weeks and months, which is why the president is going to be reviewing what the appropriate response is going forward.

We don't want to see these attacks continue. And we want to make it clear that they're unacceptable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ROBERTS: The president was warned time and time again by a lot of people on this network in particular that this was eventually going to happen. What needs to happen now, Governor?

NIKKI HALEY (R), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: I mean, a series of attacks.

This is 160 strikes. I mean, as a military spouse, this is what we fear when our loved ones are overseas, if you're not taking care of them, that something like this happens. This is not about hitting Iran hard. This is about hitting Iran smart. It's making sure -- I don't know what Biden is waiting on.

He has got to strengthen those sanctions. When he loosened them, he allowed billions of dollars from China to go into Iran when they imported oil. You have got to take away the money from Iran, because that takes away the money from the proxies. That's the first thing they need to do.

The second thing they need to do is to go and take out any of the production sites that are allowing them to do this in Iraq and Syria that they're coming from. And then the third thing is, is, you have to figure out which Iranian leaders are making the decisions and you take them out.

This isn't about hitting Iran. This is about being strategic and smart about what you do take out. When you do that, you're taking away their capabilities of hurting more American soldiers.

SANDRA SMITH, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Do you fear how that could lead to dramatic escalation here?

HALEY: Well, if you just randomly hit Iran, that would lead to dramatic escalation.

If you smartly hit Iran, that's when you go and you're going after their capabilities to hurt you further. Iran knows that they can't defeat America. They know that they don't want to take that on. The problem is, they smell blood in the water.

They have smelled weakness from Biden since Afghanistan to Ukraine and everything in between. So, they're doing what they can because they can. But until you take their money away, you are continuing to pay for them to injure and kill American soldiers. That's the part Biden needs to understand, is, he's actually giving them the money to do it.

ROBERTS: So, in the Reagan administration, the president hit a couple of oil platforms that were being used by the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. As you know, President Trump took out Qasem Soleimani. Is that the sort of retaliation, is that the sort of strike that you believe President Biden needs to launch?

HALEY: He needs to go after the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, the IRGC. He needs to go after the leadership there, those that are making the decisions.

That's what leaves them flat-footed. Find one or two of them that are making the decisions. It will chill all of them when you do that. They don't necessarily care if you take out all of their equipment and their weapons. They don't care if you take out any of the proxy fighters, because they will just add new ones to it.

What they do care about is when you touch their money or you touch their leadership. That's what gets Iran's attention.

SMITH: Do you worry -- sort of positioning this with what is happening right now here in the U.S. and obviously your run for the White House, do you fear what message this sends to voters about us getting more and more involved in the world's problems?

Looking at our FOX News voter analysis, it did not show an appetite among American voters to really increase our role in solving the world's problems. So what do you tell voters about how far you would be willing to go to hit Iran smartly, as you said?

HALEY: The goal is, we don't want to get into any wars, we don't want to get into any conflicts that we don't need to.

This is about preventing further war. It's always about preventing further war. As the wife of a combat veteran, we don't want our loved ones to go overseas. We don't want them to have to fight. So you do everything you have to prevent. Biden has done the total opposite. He's been weak. We saw it with Afghanistan. He was weak on Ukraine. He's been weak with Israel. Now he's being weak with all of these proxies.

You have to be smart, not weak. And that's the other reason. That's why we're so worried about Donald Trump. He's surrounded by chaos. He's surrounded by distractions. He's surrounded by temper tantrums. You look at the fact that both Trump and Biden, they're distracted by their investigations, they're distracted by their egos, they're distracted about everything that is all about them.

They need to be dealing with how to protect Americans, how to keep national security strong, how to focus on that. And both of them have shown they don't have the focus, they don't have the will to focus on something like this for eight years, because that's what it's going to take to make sure that we protect Americans.

ROBERTS: Governor, on the subject of your opponent, we should point out it's just four weeks now until that all-important South Carolina primary.

You're taking some new fire from Donald Trump's campaign and supporters for what you said about the E. Jean Carroll case on "Meet the Press" yesterday. Of course, the president was found liable in that case. A jury awarded her $83.3 million. Here's what you said when you were asked about it.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HALEY: I absolutely trust the jury. And I think that they made their decision based on the evidence.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

ROBERTS: So, The New York Times wrote an article around that, in which had said in part -- quote -- "Four weeks before what could be the decisive Republican primary in South Carolina, Ms. Haley is trying to navigate an extremely narrow and treacherous path, finding a way to diminish Mr. Trump's hold on her party's electorate without decisively turning conservative voters against her, the way they have destroyed other Trump critics."

How do you navigate that path, Governor?

HALEY: It cracks me up that people trying to overanalyze. I just tell the truth as I see it.

I think there have been ***politics*** played with prosecutors that have brought on some of these cases. I think there's been ***politics*** played even with the judges. But I do think American juries still get it right. They listen to the evidence. They make the decision based on the evidence.

And I do still trust that any American that sits on a jury, I trust that they're making the right decision. But this goes to a bigger thing, John. We have got a whole 'nother year of this. So, what we watched was Donald Trump throw a temper tantrum the night of the New Hampshire primary because 43 percent of Republicans didn't vote for him.

Then I see him throw a temper tantrum in this courtroom. The reality is, are we going to have a country in disarray and a world on fire and deal with more temper tantrums? You have got two guys in their 80s that are so focused on their own -- the personalities and the attention that they get, that when is the last time you heard Donald Trump talk about the American people?

When has he talked about the fact that he owes it to us to know why did he put us $8 trillion in debt in just four years? You can't say COVID, because one out of every seven dollars was spent fraudulently. Why did he go and praise President -- China's President Xi a dozen times after China gave us -- after China gave us COVID?

Why is he now proposing a 10 percent tariff increase that is going to raise taxes on every American family? Middle America is now going to pay $2,600 more because of what Trump is now proposing.

You can't go and add more taxes to the American people in a time that we're trying to climb out of it.

SMITH: Which is why I will look forward to South Carolina and ask you what you plan to do to close the gap there and how you plan to persuade more of the GOP base to back you.

I was digging through our FOX News voter analysis and some of the data points that we learned on the evening of New Hampshire. You clearly won political moderates; 25 points was your lead there, 61 to Donald Trump's 36.

But among the very conservatives, and I wonder how your -- what your plan is to attract more of them to you. Trump ran up that score among very conservatives by 67 points, OK? Those without a college degree, 65 percent supported Donald Trump, 33 percent you. Among rural voters -- while you did win with the suburban vote voters by one point, among rural voters, Donald Trump 57 percent, you 41 percent.

How do you plan to win more of the GOP base over come, say, South Carolina?

HALEY: Well, I think that they know that I was a Tea Party governor. I think they know I passed voter I.D. and ethics reform and making legislators vote on the record and have to disclose their income and do all those things.

So, my record in South Carolina strong. But this is about freedom, the fact that we need to have more freedom. We need to have fiscal -- we need to have financial freedom. We need to have freedom from government. We need to move forward with that.

And what you're seeing is, Donald Trump's trying to control more. That's what worries me. He's trying -- we saw this during COVID, where he controlled the fact what we could do, when we could do, how we could do it. Now he's going and proposing this tax on all American goods from baby strollers to appliances.

That's taking away our financial freedom. He's trying to get more and more control. And he's causing more drama and chaos in the process. That's what South Carolinians don't want. That's what Americans don't want. We're getting further and further away from freedom and more in part where there's government control or control of the party or control of what's happening.

That's taking us in the wrong direction. America has a chance to get this right. It's not about liking Donald Trump. I have no personal issues with Donald Trump. I voted for him twice. This is about, do you really think this is where we need to go for the next eight years, which, technically, he will be two years and then he will be a lame-duck?

Is this really where we want to go? Because we're going in the wrong direction. And guess who's noticing? Russia, China and Iran are noticing the fact that we are falling further away from freedom, further away from democracy, more in terms of government control, and we're becoming more like them.

We can't let that happen. This is not the time for tax increases. This is not the time to get rid of the freedoms we have. It's the time to lean into it.

SMITH: All right.

ROBERTS: Governor, four weeks until the primary. You're down by 30 points, but the 49ers were down 17 at the half, and they won. So...

HALEY: And I gained 25 points in New Hampshire in the last three weeks. So stay tuned. We're not worried.

ROBERTS: They went 27 for the win. And so we will keep watching this closely.

SMITH: Thank you so much for joining us.

ROBERTS: Thanks. Thanks for joining us. Appreciate it.

HALEY: Great to be with both of you.

SMITH: All right.

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