

# [***Mideast Tension Rise After 3 U.S. Soldiers Killed; United Nations Agency Faces Probe Over Alleged Terror Links; Rep. Cori Bush (D-MO) Under Investigation By DOJ; Hunter Biden Tries To Dismiss Gun Indictment; Human Smugglers Bring Migrants To Border In California; House Holds Hearing On Growing China Threat; 19 Charged In Drug Trafficking Operation; Joe Rogan Slams California Politics; New Images Of Galaxies From NASA's Webb Telescope***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B76-9W91-JCS1-6001-00000-00&context=1516831)

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

January 30, 2024 Tuesday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 7597 words

**Byline:** Martha MacCallum, Gillian Turner, Katie Pavlich, Rich Edson, David Spunt, Alexandria Hoff, Jonathan Hunt, Clay Travis

**Guests:** Philip Breedlove, Robert O'Brien, Mike Gallagher, Matt Bilinsky

**Body**

STEVE HARRIGAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Sandra, back to you.

SANDRA SMITH, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Steve Harrigan, live on that from Atlanta. For us, Steve, thank you. And that does it for us. Thanks so much for joining us. I'm Sandra Smith.

JOHN ROBERTS, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: And I'm John Roberts. A lot to watch for in the days ahead, and we'll be with you here every step of the way. We'll see you again tomorrow. "THE STORY" with Martha starts right now.

MARTHA MACCALLUM, FOX NEWS CHANNEL HOST: Thank you very much, you guys. Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Martha MacCallum at Fox News headquarters in New York. This is THE STORY this afternoon. The exploding Middle East is what the Wall Street Journal editorial page is calling, "the greatest crisis" that faces the Biden presidency. And now the president says he is ready to make his move in response.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Have you made a decision how you'll respond to the attack?

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: (INAUDIBLE) have not deterred these attacks in the past. What will be different this time?

BIDEN: We'll see.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: We'll see, says the President and the Commander-in-Chief. So, there you have it. Retaliation plan is in motion. When and how are the questions. But one thing was clear, I think we are now up to 166, including the attack that has just been reported late this afternoon on U.S. bases and interests in the Middle East. It was just a matter of when our servicemen and women would become the target of these casualties. Relentless attacks throughout the entire region on our interests. So, now, three people, three U.S. servicemen proudly serving this country and women, two of them are women I should say, have been hit and killed. The parents of Army Sergeant Kennedy Sanders, one of the three killed in Jordan, say that at this point they are still in shock.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Reality probably won't set in until we actually travel to go receive her remains. That's the time that I'm really not looking forward to. I'm dreading it actually.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: She was goal-oriented and she loved the service. She loved serving our country.

(END VIDEO CLIP) MACCALLUM: Now, gold star families of all three of these individuals sadly. So, the president will travel. We are now told to Dover, Delaware to meet the remains of the three U.S. Military members who were killed and that we understand is going to take place on Friday. The word is that he was waiting for response from the families. They all would like him in attendance. And so, that is where he will be one of the most difficult moments for any Commander in Chief. That will happen on Friday. So, all of this happened despite the warnings that the president gave to Iran to not carry out any such attack, and he's been doing that steadily since the attacks on October 7th on Israel. Here's a look back.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BIDEN: I have one word. Don't. Don't.

SCOTT PELLEY, CBS HOST: What is your message to Hezbollah and its backer, Iran?

BIDEN: Don't. Don't. Don't. Don't.

I've already delivered the message to Iran. They know I'm not going to do anything.

(END VIDEO CLIP) MACCALLUM: So, first to Retired General Philip Breedlove, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander, now a distinguished chair at the Middle East Institute. General, thank you very much for being here this afternoon. As you listen to the President say that he has a plan for retaliation, what goes through your mind? What do you think should happen at this point in what has become an increasing difficult, messy situation?

GEN. PHILIP BREEDLOVE (RET.), FORMER NATO ALLIED SUPREME COMMANDER: Well, thanks for having me on, and I am absolutely sure by this time the CENTCOM commander through the SECDEF has delivered a range of actions to the president and those will include very impactful actions all the way down to the sort of regular actions that we've been taking for some time now. And now, it will be up to our president to decide which of those he chooses and how he chooses to send a clear message now to Iran because it's apparent they haven't heard him yet.

MACCALLUM: So, when you look at the options that are on the table here, you know, the Wall Street Journal has said that they need to go directly after the assets of Iran. They say that there has been an Iranian spy ship going all through the Red Sea, and they suggest that one option would be to put that that Iranian ship on the bottom of the Red Sea. Is that the kind of retaliation that you expect we're going to see and do you think it's going to be one action, several actions?

BREEDLOVE: Well, I can't second-guess our president, but so far, we have taken pretty mild actions against the factions that are working for Iran as opposed to Iran. And frankly, I would surmise that that may be what we see again is an attack against one of these, these factions who are carrying out Iran's bidding. Certainly, going after a capital asset like a ship or some of the infrastructure for oil or other of those things which are highly valued by Iran would be a clear message.

MACCALLUM: So, the Iranian government has suggested that a strike on Iran itself would be a red line. Does it seem to you that it is Iran that is setting the tone here? Iran that is creating the narrative, and obviously they very much want us out of that entire region. Do you think they're getting closer to that goal with this president?

BREEDLOVE: Well, I think you hit it right on the nail right on the head there. And that is that it is Iran that has the initiative. Now, we have lost the initiative in this in this exchange. And that's one of the things we need to seek to regain. We need to be driving this show and not Iran. This is exactly how it happened. Also, in Ukraine, we ceded the initiatives to the Russians and they've been running the show ever since. We need to get in front of this, stop shooting behind the target, and take the initiative.

MACCALLUM: And do you expect that this commander in chief will do that? Will he be able to turn that around? I know the former Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, has said that this president has been wrong about every foreign policy decision he's made. We've watched the withdrawal from Afghanistan. We have watched what has happened in these situations. How much confidence do you have?

BREEDLOVE: I'm not going to predict the future. Our past says that we will strike again at the proxies.

MACCALLUM: All right, General Breedlove, thank you. As always, it's good to have you with us, former NATO Supreme Allied Commander joining us this afternoon. Thank you, sir. So, in a matter of weeks, the situation in the Middle East has gone from what was perceived by this administration to be a very quiet situation and a somewhat peaceful one, according to top Biden officials, to the powder keg that we are now seeing. Watch this contrast.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) JAKE SULLIVAN, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER: The Middle East region is quieter today than it has been in two decades.

ANTONY BLINKEN, U.S. SECRETARY OF STATES: This is an incredibly volatile time in the Middle East. I would argue that we have not seen a situation as dangerous as the one we're facing now across the region since at least 1973.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: With that, we bring in Robert O'Brien, former National Security Advisor under President Trump. Mr. O'Brien, good to have you with us as always. Thank you for being here, sir. What do you make of the contrast from the National Security Advisor who holds the post that you once held, Jake Sullivan, his assessment, and now how dramatically different it is from the Secretary of State, Antony Blinken?

ROBERT O'BRIEN, FORMER NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR UNDER PRESIDENT TRUMP: Well, look, appeasement always buys you peace for a short period of time. But then, as Winston Churchill said, Martha, you have to drink the dregs of the bitter cup down the road, and we're drinking those dregs now. Tony Blinken said it's the most dangerous time since 1973. I disagree with him. I think it's the most dangerous time for the world, not just for the Middle East since 1938. And how did we get here? I mean, think of this, Martha.

Just three short years ago, we had peace in the Middle East. We were working towards a peaceful settlement of Afghanistan. The Russians were deterred. We were putting the Chinese in a box. Taiwan was safe. And now, everything in the world is aflame. And it's because President Biden moved away from a peace through strength posture that President Trump had into an appeasement posture. And appeasement, as we know from history, just doesn't work. Not with these, not with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin and the ayatollahs.

MACCALLUM: This is President Biden when he was boarding Air Force One today, responding to how, to what degree he holds Iran responsible. Let's watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you hold Iran responsible for the deaths of those 3 Americans?

BIDEN: I do hold them responsible in the sense of supplying the weapons to the people who did it.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: What do you think of that answer?

O'BRIEN: Look, Hamas, Hezbollah, Kataib Hezbollah in Iraq, the Syrian regime, the Houthis -- Martha, these guys wouldn't shoot a B.B. gun over our border without Iran's approval. Iran's directly responsible. They're killing our soldiers. And you know, you talk about a red line that Iran's setting in your last segment. Why aren't we setting the red lines? Isn't killing American soldiers and sailors and Marines a red line? We lost two Navy SEALs a couple of weeks ago, 10 days ago. We lost three American soldiers now recently. I grieve and mourn for the parents and we may lose more. There are a number of seriously injured soldiers in this attack. So, that's a red line for me and Iran has crossed it dramatically. And if America doesn't respond, we're going to have more of this and not just in the Middle East.

MACCALLUM: Frightening scenario. Sir, thank you very much. Robert O'Brien, we're going to follow this day by day. We always appreciate you being here. And we're also going to keep looking at the large picture in terms of our ability to deter, as you have just pointed out, and the possibilities for what none of us want, which is a wider conflict as a result of all of this. So, we hope that the reins can be held at the White House on these continually dangerous situations. Thank you very much, Robert O'Brien. Good to have you here. Thanks.

O'BRIEN: Thank you. Thank you, Martha. Thank you.

MACCALLUM: Thank you. So, later this hour, we will be joined by Congressman Mike Gallagher, who says that President Biden is waging a minimum pressure campaign against the Houthis and Iran. He oversees the committee on China on the Hill. That is what China's role is in all of this is something I'm going to get into with him moments away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: So, United Nations is asking the United States and other big donors to "keep giving money" to the U.N. Relief Agency, after Israel accused some of its workers of taking part in the October 7th Hamas attacks.

Israel also reportedly says up to 10 percent of the agency's staff, hundreds of workers may have ties to terror groups, according to investigative reporting by The Wall Street Journal.

Now, more than a dozen countries have suspended their funding, while the United Nations investigates these claims. State department and foreign policy correspondent Gillian Turner, live with this backstory from the state department this afternoon. Hi, Gillian.

GILLIAN TURNER, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha. Well, the U.N. has said a number of times now publicly that a, "independent" investigation is underway into these allegations that its staff and Gaza have ties to terrorists.

I asked the Department spokesman Matt Miller about these accusations a moment ago. Here is what he said.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MATTHEW MILLER, SPOKESMAN, UNITED STATES STATE DEPARTMENT: We do have confidence in the U.N.'s ability to conduct this investigation. We have been engaging with them about what that investigation might look like. But we do broadly have faith in their ability to investigate this. We've welcomed the initial steps that they have taken. But the proof will be in the pudding.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

TURNER: The reality though is that this investigation is not being conducted independently. An office at the U.N. is carrying it out.

And now, anger at the U.N. over allegations that staff is working with terrorist is mounting 16 countries now have pulled funding for UNRWA since just Friday. This afternoon, the U.N. is going to convene its top donors in New York to plead for reinstatement of those funds.

Martha, a House hearing, interestingly, is underway right now, as we speak, lawmakers are, of course, concerned that tens of millions of dollars may have ended up in the hands of Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad. Martha.

MACCALLUM: Thank you very much. Gillian Turner, reporting.

So, let's bring in townhall.com editor Katie Pavlich, a Fox News contributor. Katie, good to have you with us this afternoon.

KATIE PAVLICH, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CONTRIBUTOR: Good to see you.

MACCALLUM: I just want to put up the funding pattern here for this organization within the United Nations, because this has been a controversial organization for a long time.

And President Obama's administration gave it $2.4 billion. And then, you see this big dip as the Trump administration cut funding dramatically, down to $424. 6 million. And then, as soon as President Biden got back in office, it went ramped up back to a billion dollars. And now, according to this reporting, a chunk of this money, and as hundreds of the people who work there have been supporting Hamas and other terror organizations. How do you see this and what needs to happen now, Katie?

PAVLICH: Well, we keep hearing about this pause and the funding from the United States and other countries. But according to the state department, the pause in funding only happens after January 24. So, $51 million that's already been allocated, will still go to UNRWA, despite these new findings, which as you mentioned, are essentially old findings because UNRWA has been embroiled in partnering with terrorists for a very long time.

You bring up the numbers from the Biden administration, the Trump administration, the Obama administration, the Trump administration cut funding because of exactly what we're seeing now in the aftermath of the October 7th terrorist attack. The Biden administration in early 2021, reinstated this funding, and admitted that it would probably go to terrorist organizations like Hamas, but they were just going to risk it.

And then, of course, now you have what we're seeing happening in the Gaza Strip. When it comes to what they are going to do moving forward, it's that -- you know, obvious that UNRWA has been involved in these terrorist activities.

The biggest problem is that they don't consider groups like Hamas, Palestinian Islamic Jihad, other Islamic groups in the Gaza Strip, or the West Bank, as terrorist organizations and the United States doesn't do the vetting of UNRWA employees.

And one of the things that stuck out to me in that Wall Street Journal reporting that you mentioned, is that 49 percent of UNRWA employees said they had a close relative or friend who was part of one of these terrorist organizations.

And so, for the U.N. now to be investigating itself will not lead to any less corruption there and it certainly won't lead to this being cleared out in terms of the ideology that's been perpetrated.

UNRWA has been a partner to Hamas, whether it's helping store weapons in schools, or whether it's teaching terrorism ideology to children in those same schools.

MACCALLUM: I mean, it's astonishing, the millions of dollars that go to these organizations, and I think most people are under the impression that the money goes to these children that it goes to these aid operations, which I think everybody would be in favor of to help the innocent who are caught in the middle of the struggles.

But clearly, the U.N. has done poor oversight here according to this investigation. So, we'll follow it.

Katie, thank you very much for weighing in. Always good to see you.

PAVLICH: Indeed. Thanks, Martha. Good to see you.

MACCALLUM: So, still ahead, Clay Travis and brand-new reaction from Democrat Congresswoman Cori Bush, who is being investigated over improper use of campaign cash to pay a security guard who is now her husband.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No use of the MRA.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Did you hire him just because you were dating him?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: Congresswoman Cori Bush, confirming that her campaign is under federal investigation over spending on her personal security. The Missouri Democrat has defended hiring her own private security even as she calls to cut police funding. She says that she is cooperating with the feds, insisting that she has not broken any laws or House rules.

Senior national correspondent Rich Edson gets us the backstory here from Washington.

Hi, Rich.

RICH EDSON, FOX NEWS CHANNEL WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT: Yes. Good afternoon, Martha.

Well, Representative Cori Bush released a statement then she read it at the House steps and took no questions.

Bush acknowledged the Department of Justice, Federal Election Commission, Health Ethics Committee are all investigating her. The congresswoman says the Office of Congressional Ethics looked into this situation for months and found no wrongdoing last year and voted unanimously to dismiss the case.

Though Bush confirmed she spent campaign funds to hire private security, including her husband. She says she followed the rules and these multiple investigations are just part of a political hit job.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

REP. CORI BUSH (D-MO): I am under no illusion that these right-wing organizations will stop politicizing and pursuing efforts to attack me and the work that the people of St. Louis sent me to Congress to do; to lead boldly, to legislate change my constituents can feel, and to save lives.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

EDSON: In March, Bush faced FEC ethics complaints for paying her husband, Courtney Merritts $60,000 in security fees and 2022.

Merritts worked security on Bush's campaign and they married last year. Bush's office says Merritts is an Army veteran and can provide security services at or below a fair market rate.

At the time, Merritts held no private security license in St. Louis or here in D.C. FEC rules allow lawmakers to pay family members for bona fide services at a fair market value.

She is a vocal advocate of defunding the police. Bush has been criticized for spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on private security. The representative says she needs it because there have been threats to her life, and that she is using campaign funds, not taxpayer dollars. Martha?

MACCALLUM: Rich, thank you very much. Right now, President Biden -- it is a live shot, as he leaves Palm Beach today on his way to Miami. He has been holding campaign events in Florida.

When we saw the president leaving the White House earlier, he said a couple of things. He said that he had decided how he's going to retaliate for the death of three American service members. We have yet to learn exactly what form that will take. We will see because we know that the White House has said it will happen at a time and place of the commander in chief choosing along with his leadership at the Department of Defense.

You see the president as he heads up the stairs to Air Force One right now.

He also said that he has done all he can when it comes to the border. Obviously, a huge story, a huge topic for voters across the nation as we watch the president on Air Force One. Will soon be on its way from Palm Beach to Miami, as the president makes these, you know, stops related to his campaign ostensibly, as he is on the road in Florida today.

So, we'll keep a close eye on the movements of the president this afternoon and see if he has anything else to say on these very big topics, and we'll be joined by Clay Travis, coming up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: All right. This just crossing moments ago. Hunter Biden is now trying to, in conjunction with his attorneys of course, throw out his indictment surrounding the gun charges in Delaware. He's got a lot on his plate, as you know. That is just one of the cases against him. It's separate from the rather large indictment on tax charges that he faces in California. Justice correspondent David Spunt reporting on all of this live for us from Washington. Hi, David.

DAVID SPUNT, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha. This was just filed just moments ago in the federal court docket. Basically what we have here is that Hunter Biden entered into a plea agreement with the federal government last year for lying on a federal forum saying that he was not under the influence of drugs when he owned a gun for less than two weeks back in 2018. That plea agreement fell completely through. It was partially called a diversion agreement that would have allowed Hunter Biden to avoid jail time.

Well, when that plea agreement fell through with the government, Martha, in a very public way, Special Counsel David Weiss, meaning the DOJ, says everything fell through. We're starting from square one. Hunter Biden was reindicted in Delaware. He's now going to court and actually facing these charges right now, so that diversion agreement will not happen for him.

However, and not to be too confusing here, this can get a little complicated. His attorneys today just filed with the court and with the federal judge saying the original diversion agreement is still in effect. They wrote the prosecution is bound by the agreements that it makes, approves and signs with a defendant just as often as it seeks to hold defendants to the terms of the agreements that defendants make and sign. The court must not allow the prosecution to reneg on its agreement.

As you mentioned, Hunter Biden is facing federal tax charges in California and he's facing these federal gun charges in Delaware. This is all during an election year. So now we wait to see what the judge says. But this is what Hunter Biden's team wants to do, is dismiss the charges. Whether or not it happens doesn't appear that the special prosecutor or special counsel will be on board with this.

MACCALLUM: David, thank you. Lots to follow here on the legal front across 2024. Thanks, David. We're going to be seeing a lot of you across this year. David Spunt at the Justice Department.

So President Biden getting a lot of criticism for this today. Republicans say that his actions have allowed migrants in record numbers to illegally flood into this country ever since he became president. Watch his comment.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Have you done everything you can do with executive authority or is there more you could after the --

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES: I've done all I can do. Just give me the power, I've asked since the very day I got into office. Give me the border control. Give me the people. Give me the judges, give me the people who can stop this and make it work right.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: OK. Let's hold on to that because we may want to play that again. Our cameras caught human smugglers dropping off more than a dozen migrants. This is just one of the instances. But just watch this. Oh, just go down to the end of the fence and just come round the barbed wire. And you are -- just got free. Come on in. Welcome to America.

This is in California. This group included 97 migrants from China, 91 from Turkey, dozens more from Brazil and India, from all over the world basically flying, in most cases, into airports in South America, Central America, and then making their way into the United States because it's easy, as you can see.

So with that, let's bring in OutKick founder Clay Travis. Clay, thank you very much for being here. So let's break down what the president had to say. He said, I've done all I can do at the border. He said, give me the power. I have asked from the very day I got into office, which is now almost three years ago. And during that time, the problem has only gotten worse. Give me the border patrol, give me the judges, give me the people who can stop this and make it work right. Your thoughts, and welcome.

CLAY TRAVIS, FOUNDER, OUTKICK: Well, it's an election year. It's amazing. Thanks for having me on, Martha. As you pointed out, he's been in office for three years now, and he hasn't really seemed to care about the border at all. I think he visited once. He put Kamala Harris in charge. She was the border czar, and I don't know how you prove how little you care about something any more than putting Kamala Harris in charge of it, because she's the most incompetent vice president we've ever seen.

But he started his time in office, Martha, by deciding to eradicate all of the border policies that Donald Trump had put in place, which had led to a massive decline in illegal border crossings. And Stephen Miller, who I believe is about as knowledgeable on the border as anybody, we had him on the Clay and Buck radio show in the last couple of days. And he said, with a stroke of a pen, Joe Biden could solve all of the issues at the border without Congress needing to be involved at all. All he'd have to do is revoke all the changes that he made, that he did away with, that Trump had put in place.

And let me also put this, and I think this is really important contextually, Martha. What has Joe Biden done when he really cares about an issue? He's acted even though he may not have had the authority. Remember when he said, hey, I'm going to extend the eviction moratorium, even though Congress clearly hadn't given him the authority to do it during the COVID days under that auspices. He did it. He didn't care. The Supreme Court struck him down.

Remember what he did with student debt? Young people, he decided he wanted their votes in 2022 even though he didn't have the authority. He said, I'm wiping out $400 billion plus in debt. Really not wiping it out, just taking it on, right, as a part of our tax dollars. And then remember what he did with the COVID shot. He didn't have the mandate under OSHA authority to make 84 million Americans have to get the COVID shot. He tried it anyway.

That's three things, Martha, that he clearly didn't have the authority to undertake. And he did it no matter what. If he really wanted to solve the border issue, do you think he'd wait for Congress? Of course not. He's just trying to shift the blame for what he and his administration have caused.

MACCALLUM: I mean, it would be fairly easy. You know, I can do, I've done all I can is absolutely just factually not true.

TRAVIS: Correct.

MACCALLUM: He could replace Remain in Mexico, he could implement -- the law already exists. If you are seeking asylum, the law is you're supposed to go to the first safe country out of your country and begin the process there. You can also end catch and release. I know you have said all of this, I just want to reiterate it.

But I want to play this because this is a game changer, politically, in 2024. Comments like this from this state councilman, Illinois state rep. I should say, Andre Smith, in Chicago talking to Lawrence Jones today about how fed up people are in Chicago and other places as well, with the competing that is going on for the dollars, for the people in Chicago. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LAWRENCE JONES, FOX NEWS HOST: Where is the money coming from to pay for all of this?

ANDRE SMITH (D), ILLINOIS STATE REP CANDIDATE: Well, the money is coming from the hard-owned taxpayers, taxpayers dollars that don't have the luxury now to go to the park in their community because migrants are there.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: Yes. I mean, this is the game changer narrative here.

TRAVIS: I think you're 100% right, Martha. And this is -- what's really happening, and I think you got to give credit to Greg Abbott in particular --

MACCALLUM: Absolutely.

TRAVIS: -- is he has made every part of these sanctuary cities, whether it's New York, whether it's Washington DC, Philadelphia, Denver, Chicago. He's made them bear the cost of what Texas deals with every single day. And a lot of people said, oh, I don't know how this is going to change things to put these illegal immigrants on buses and send them all over the country. It's taken a pin prick, Martha, of what Texas deals with every day to effectively cripple the city budgets of New York, of DC, of Chicago, of Denver. And they cannot handle this influx of individuals.

And what you're seeing is, Biden has been, I think, a poor president on many different fronts. But, Martha, all the data reflects for white, black, Asian, Hispanic. The number one issue that Joe Biden is underwater on is immigration. Overwhelmingly, Americans believe that he has failed. What he's trying to do now is shift the blame in an election year. And I don't think most Americans are going to fall for it.

MACCALLUM: Yes. I mean, we don't have time to play it, but RFK Jr. was on this morning saying you got to fix the 27 big gaps in the wall. He said you absolutely have to have a border. And he said that he would do that in his administration. So there are going to be maybe a lot of options or at least few for people as we head into 2024 or deeper into it. So we'll see what happens. It's going to be interesting.

Clay, thank you. It's always great to see you. Thanks for coming by.

TRAVIS: Thank you, Martha. I appreciate it.

MACCALLUM: Clay Travis. So as we wait to see how President Biden will choose to respond to the drone strike that killed three US soldiers, China is watching all of this very closely to see how our president responds. After reportedly asking Iran, China did, to rein in the Houthis, they are now warning against a "vicious cycle of retaliation," the Chinese are. Watch this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

WANG WENBIN, CHINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY SPOKESPERSON: The current situation in the Middle East is highly complex and sensitive, and we hope that all parties concerned will exercise calm and restraint, strengthen dialogue and communication, avoid being caught in a vicious cycle of retaliation, and prevent further escalation of tensions in the region.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: OK. So Republican Congressman Mike Gallagher is chair of the Select Committee on the CCP. He just wrapped a very important hearing with some very smart folks about the growing threat that is posed by China. We're going to show you a bit of that in just a moment, including Mike Pompeo who was there. First, to correspondent Alexandria Hoff, who brings us up to speed here. Hi, Alexandria.

ALEXANDRIA HOFF, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Hi, Martha. Yes, I tuned into this hearing today. And the focus of it was really the way that the Chinese Communist Party aligns itself with America's adversaries, Russia, North Korea and Iran. Former secretary of State under Trump, Mike Pompeo, and former Obama Defense Secretary Leon Panetta both testified before the bipartisan House Select Committee today, agreeing that this anti-US bond is growing tighter.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MIKE POMPEO, FORMER SECRETARY OF STATE: There are Iranian drones going to Russia to kill Ukrainian kids. There's Russian energy flowing to China. There's Chinese semiconductors flowing to the Russian defense industry, Iranian oil into both Russia and China. These actors are working to undermine the things that matter most to us here at home.

HOFF: Secretary Pompeo testified that the US has lost the deterrence model. He feels that this has happened in Europe, in the Middle East, and is on the cusp of happening in Asia as well. Secretary Panetta followed up on that saying that the United States must bolster our own alliances, commit to arming and training Taiwan, and strengthen a force posture, he said.

LEON PANETTA, FORMER DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SECRETARY: There's no question we've had increased military and economic dialogue. But make no mistake, the only way to try to avoid war with China, the only way to deal with China, is from strength, from strength. Both China and Russia became more aggressive when they sensed weakness on the part of the US.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HOFF: Now, this hearing took place the same day as debut meetings in Beijing to stem the flow of chemicals used to make fentanyl. It's part of a new counternarcotics partnership between the United States and China. But, you know, the CCP has historically denied any responsibility for the synthetic opioid crisis in the United States, which between 2021 and 22 alone killed more than 146,000 Americans. Martha?

MACCALLUM: Stunning and terrible. Thank you, Alex. So with that, we bring in Republican Congressman from Wisconsin, Mike Gallagher. He is chair of the Select Committee on the CCP. He also sits on the Armed Services and Intelligence Committees, and served seven years in active duty with the United States Marines, two deployments in Iraq. Congressman, it's always good to have you with us. Thank you very much for joining us.

I mean, one of the things we've seen is the failure of deterrence here. And I just want to highlight what Alex just mentioned from the former secretary of state and CIA Director Mike Pompeo from the hearing that you had in your committee today. Watch this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

POMPEO: We've got deterrence lost in Europe, we have deterrence lost in the Middle East, we are on the cusp of losing that very deterrent model in Asia as well. One could argue that elements of that have already been lost.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So what was the biggest takeaway for you from this hearing? And I should point out, we live in an environment where you have a lot of people in the country who don't want to see us involved in any more foreign wars.

REP. MIKE GALLAGHER, (R-WI): The biggest takeaway for me is that for those, particularly on Wall Street and American corporate industry, who would discount the likelihood that Xi Jinping could start a war over Taiwan, you're living in a fantasy land. Because what we have seen in Europe, as Secretary Pompeo aptly pointed out, what we've seen in the Middle East is that dictators, hostile regimes, may do something that seems irrational from a western perspective, but makes sense from their perspective, which is based solely on regime preservation. The other big takeaway is that the balance of power, particularly the conventional balance of power in the Indo Pacific, our priority theater, is going in the wrong direction. We need to urgently invest in our own defense to do what Secretary Panetta said, a democratic defense secretary.

We need to reestablish peace through strength. The logic of deterrence is actually quite simple. We all learned it on the playground. If we do not have strength, if we continue to project weakness, we could find ourselves stumbling into a war in the Pacific, which will make the current crisis in the Middle East and the current crisis in Ukraine look like child's play in comparison.

MACCALLUM: So clearly, China is in a better position because of what's going on in Ukraine and because of what's going on in Iran, and Iran's constant attacks against U.S bases. How much does China benefit from what is now being viewed as the Biden administration essentially trying to ignore the Middle East for the past few years?

GALLAGHER: Yes. And even worse than that, I would say having a deliberate policy of what they might call detente or with Iran, but what we can more accurately call appeasement. From the start of this administration trying to revive the Iran deal, which basically legitimized their industrial scale nuclear program, delisting the Houthis, now placing restrictions on aid to Israel. The list is much longer than that, but effectively we've had a policy of appeasement with respect to Iran, and therefore Iran has grown more aggressive.

The North Star for this administration has been fear of provoking Iran. And they fail to see that that fear itself is provocative because it emboldens our enemies. I think China similarly is looking at our response both in Europe and the Middle East and trying to figure out, well, might now be a good time to test the United States when they don't seem to want to invest in their own military, when their commander in chief keeps sending these signals of weakness on the world stage, and when they're internally distracted by a presidential election.

I fear we've entered the window of maximum danger, which is why men and women of good faith in both parties need to come together, put away all the childish political shenanigans, and start to restore deterrence and peace through strength.

MACCALLUM: Before I let you go, I just want to play this from the White House press secretary and get your reaction to it. As a veteran, it's gotten a lot of attention. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

KARINE JEAN-PIERRE, WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY: Their deepest condolences go out, and our heartfelt condolences go out to the families who lost three brave -- three folks who are military, folks who are brave, who are always fighting, who are fighting on behalf of this administration, of the American people. Obviously, more so, more importantly, we lost those souls.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: What goes through your mind when you hear that, congressman?

GALLAGHER: I mean, clearly, she can't even talk with a basic fluency about how to describe military issues. Now, I don't expect her to talk with the same fluency as someone who's on active duty, but it's just troubling. I mean, she's the press secretary for the Biden administration. I think it undermines the gravity of the situation, and it's just unfortunate and of a piece with the abysmal communication strategy we've seen from this administration when dealing with crises and unwillingness to take responsibility and change course when they fail.

MACCALLUM: Leave it there. Congressman Mike Gallagher, head of the China commission on the Hill. Very important hearings held today on this, and everybody needs to be up to speed to what's going on here because it could be something that we all have to deal with sooner or later. Thank you very much, congressman. Good to see you, as always.

GALLAGHER: Thank you.

MACCALLUM: So the FBI dismantles a massive crime operation in California, seizing huge amounts of fentanyl and other poisonous drugs as we learn why podcast king, Joe Rogan, has now hightailed it out of the state. He has left California for Texas.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE ROGAN, PODCAST HOST: California went nuts, man. Their approach to law enforcement is so insane. It's so insane. The no cash bail, the letting people out for committing violent crimes.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MACCALLUM: Take a look at this. The feds say that they have busted a trafficking operation involving Mexican cartels, thousands of pounds of drugs, three countries, and a suspect with ties to the mafia. Surprise, surprise. Chief correspondent Jonathan Hunt reporting live from Los Angeles. Hi, Jonathan.

JONATHAN HUNT, FOX NEWS CHIEF CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Martha. This was an international drug smuggling operation that spanned thousands of miles from Mexico, through the US and into Canada, and involved the seizure of nearly 2,000 pounds of methamphetamine, 2,000 pounds of cocaine, and 44 pounds of fentanyl, street value of at least $16 million. Twelve people allegedly involved are now in custody following a joint operation by the FBI, the Los Angeles Police Department, US Customs and Border Protection, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

MARTIN ESTRADA, US ATTORNEY: The takedown we are announcing today underscores that drug trafficking is a global problem, not a local one. It also shows that at the upper echelons in drug trafficking organizations, the people pulling the strings are sophisticated organized criminals.

HUNT: The smuggling operation was run from Canada using a network of long- haul truck drivers who would pick up the Mexican supplied drugs in Los Angeles and then drive to Canada, crossing via the Detroit Windsor Tunnel, the Buffalo Peace Bridge, and the Blue Water Bridge.

ESTRADA: This was a highly lucrative operation for these conspirators. For example, a kilogram of methamphetamine in Canada can sell for 20 times more than it would sell in Los Angeles. These conspirators stood to make tens of millions of dollars through this conspiracy.

HUNT: In all, charges against 19 people were unsealed today. The FBI and its law enforcement partners in what is called Operation Dead Hand are still looking for seven of those charged, Martha. And likely this is the tip of the iceberg as usual.

MACCALLUM: Likely. Jonathan, thank you very much.

So speaking of all of that, now Joe Rogan making the case for why he left California and moved to Texas. He did that in 2020. So the podcaster, who is number one, says that he used to be 100% left leaning, but people in what he calls blue bubbles have quote, in his words, "gone insane."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROGAN: Well, I used to be a part of the blue bubble. I was 100% a left leaning person who lived in Los Angeles. I was 100%. I never voted Republican my whole life. But California went nuts, man. It's gone like full communist. It's out of its mind.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So let's bring in Matt Bilinsky, an attorney, host of the "Prevailing Narrative" podcast and a Los Angeles resident. Matt, good to have you here.

So in 75,000 Californians left in 2023, and that's after we saw this beginning -- this large migration start to happen. During that period, 473,000 people moved to Texas. What's your reaction to what Rogan is talking about here? It's been a theme he's been on for a while.

MATT BILINSKY, ATTORNEY: No doubt. I think we've seen California in recorded history has had three years of net outflow migration, meaning more people have left the state than have come in, those years happen to be 2021, 2022, 2023. Clearly, the sentiment that Joe Rogan is expressing is a popular one. And looking at the quality of life issues in California, from homelessness, to crime, to childhood education, taxes, development, people are really not feeling good about the quality of life here.

Some of them are deciding to leave and vote with their feet. And for the rest of us that have stayed here, we're trying to vote back in the right direction to bring some sort of normalcy and sensibility to the governance here.

MACCALLUM: Let's go to Rogan here again. And he's talking about how the content moves online. And it really goes into what you talk about, which is the prevailing narrative and how it happens on social media. Listen to this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROGAN: If you have enough of that online, it moves the needle. And the way I describe it the other day, it's like -- going a certain direction. This is a ship where people logically work through things, and this is a ship that's adjusted by the algorithm, affected by the algorithm. It just moves that much. Over time, this is what we're seeing.

So over time, you and I who used to be on the left are now like, where's the left? Where are you guys? You guys are so far left away.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes. Yes, yes.

ROGAN: I can't even see you.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Yes, yes.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MACCALLUM: So what do you think the impact is on ***politics*** from all of this? And do you see it starting to shift again, and is it shifting to parties or is it shifting somewhere else?

BILINSKY: It's shifting within the Democratic Party because, let's be honest, most of the choices in California and Los Angeles, ***politics*** in particular, are crazy Democrat versus maybe not crazy Democrat. And luckily, we've had a couple sane democratic options recently, and people are starting to notice that. And people who were reliable democratic voters didn't expect. It crept up on them.

They didn't think someone like George Gascon, the district attorney, who's got a very sympathetic to criminality type of record on the issue, they didn't expect people like him to come around. They figured it would always be kind of sensible Democrats. And until it's about four or five years into these types of cycles, they don't realize that. So people are starting to wake up, but it's tougher to dig out of that hole than it is to keep away from the hall in the first place.

Just for instance, Karen Bass, who was democratically elected mayor of Los Angeles, she noticed that crime was becoming an issue. The citizens were reacting poorly to it. She went and secured additional funding for the police. Only problem is, nobody wants the job. They are waving money at police -- at people to come be cops in Los Angeles. Nobody wants the job because culturally, it's just not something that people feel guilt about anymore.

MACCALLUM: Matt Bilinsky of the "Prevailing Narrative" podcast, great to have you with us, Matt. Thank you very much.

BILINSKY: Thank you.

MACCALLUM: So we'll leave you with this today. This is a great story. New images of galaxies millions of light years away from us. They're from NASA's James Webb telescope. Scientists working on the project say the amount of detail, and they look at these images all the time. They can't believe how clear and definitive these issues are. They say they are absolutely mind blowing in terms of the birth and death of stars, which is fascinating.

So that is "The Story" for today. Thanks for joining us, everybody. Tuesday, January 30th. "Your World" starts right now.

**Load-Date:** January 30, 2024

**End of Document**