

# [***Georgia Misconduct Hearing And Trump Businesses Verdict; Father Of District Attorney Testifies; Trump On New York Civil Trial Verdict; World Leaders Blame Putin; Impeachment Inquiry: Hunter Associate Transcript And FBI Informant Fallout; Antisemitism Probe: House Republican Subpoenas Harvard Leaders; Front Lines: Forces Storm Hospital Believed To House Hostage Remains; Buffer Zone: Egypt Appears To Building Wall Near Gaza Border; Party Favors: Manchin Not Running For President; President Biden Visits East Palestinian, Ohio, Over One Year After Train Derailment; Five Suspects Arraigned For Their Alleged Roles In Assault Of Two New York City Officers; Military Analyst Examines Current State Of Russian Invasion Of Ukraine; Polling Indicates Decrease In Voter Support For Donald Trump If He Is Convicted Of Crime; Kremlin Critics Alexei Navalny Dies While Imprisoned In Russian Penal Colony***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BBT-YKV1-JCS1-60CG-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News FOX SPECIAL REPORT WITH BRET BAIER 6:00 PM EST

February 16, 2024 Friday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; Domestic

**Length:** 7096 words

**Byline:** Shannon Bream, Eric Shawn, Steve Harrigan, David Spunt, Lucas Tomlinson, Bret Baier, CB Cotton, Jack Keane

**Guests:** Ben Domenech, Julia Manchester, Vince Coglianese

**Body**

LETITIA JAMES, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF NEW YORK: And every day Americans cannot lie to a bank about how much money they have in order to get a mortgage to buy a home, or a loan to keep their business afloat. Or to send their child to college.

And if they did, our government would throw a book at them.

I want to thank the entire incredible and hardworking team in my office that tried this case. Because the scale and the scope of Donald Trump's fraud is staggering. And so, to his, his ego, and his belief that the rules did not apply to him.

Today, we are holding Donald Trump accountable. We are holding him accountable for lying, cheating, and a lack of contrition, and for flouting the rules that all of us must play by. Because there cannot be different rules for different people in this country. And former presidents are no exception.

This decision is a massive victory for every American who believes in that simple but fundamental pillar of our democracy.

That the rule of law applies to all of us, equally, fairly, and justly. Thank you.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

SHANNON BREAM, FOX NEWS CHANNEL ANCHOR: Good evening. Welcome to Washington. I'm Shannon Bream in for Bret Baier.

"BREAKING TONIGHT", you just heard from the New York Attorney General. Now, we are awaiting remarks from former President Trump. We will monitor that. We'll bring you any breaking news when we do hear from him.

Two major courtroom dramas today involving legal action against former President Trump. In Atlanta, more testimony in the Trump legal team's effort to disqualify the lead prosecutor in that election interference case. And a judge in New York finds Mr. Trump guilty in his civil fraud trial, orders him to pay more than $350 million.

We've got "FOX TEAM COVERAGE" tonight. Steve Harrigan in Atlanta, with the latest on the Georgia misconduct trial.

But we begin with senior correspondent Eric Shawn in New York. Good evening, Eric.

ERIC SHAWN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL SENIOR CORRESPONDENT: Good evening, Shannon.

New York State Attorney General Letitia James, who you just saw -- well, she wanted a penalty of $370 million. She got nearly $364 million. And that number will go up because of interest. Judge Arthur Engoron ruled the former president and his sons engaged in a years' long financial fraud to deceive banks and lenders. The judge said quote, their complete lack of contrition and remorse borders on the pathological.

Mr. Trump is barred from doing business in New York for three years, and a monitor will continue to oversee the Trump companies for at least three years, removing control from the Trump family.

Engoron ruled that Mr. Trump submitted false financial statements to secure a more favorable loans from banks. And while the former president said he relied on accountants, the judge said they relied on the fake numbers that they were given by the Trump Organization.

The judge also said this about the former president's testimony on the stand quote, "Overall, Donald Trump rarely responded to the questions asked, and he frequently interjected long, irrelevant speeches and issues far beyond the scope of the trial. His refusal to answer the questions directly, or in some cases, at all, severely compromised his credibility."

The former president, for example, boasted that Mar-a-Lago is worth, "a billion or a billion and a half, he said. But the judge said that would mean it would be worth more than 400 percent beyond any other residents in the country.

Besides, Mr. Trump, his sons, Donald Jr. and Eric, must pay over $4 million each, and they are barred for doing business in the Empire State for two years.

The former president tonight responding on Truth Social, saying, in part, "The decision is a complete and total sham. There were no victims, no damages, no complaints, only satisfied banks and insurance companies, which made a ton of money.

The attorney general also called this a massive victory, saying that Mr. Trump has been, "engaging in years of incredible financial fraud to enrich himself." Mr. Trump's lawyer, Alina Habba, blasted the ruling as quote, a manifest injustice and she vows an appeal.

The Trump legacy of the art of the deal now it seems, hangs in the balance. Shannon.

BREAM: Eric Shawn, you've been on this from the beginning. Thank you very much.

We are going to hear from the former president. In just moments, we will take you there and monitor that for news.

In the meantime, the Fulton County Georgia district attorney in charge of the prosecution of the former president did not testify today in her misconduct hearing.

Fani Willis is accused of having an improper relationship with a colleague. Today, it was her father's turn on the stand. Correspondent Steve Harrigan is in Atlanta tonight. Good evening, Steve.

STEVE HARRIGAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT: Good evening. We thought we are going to see Fani Willis today. Everyone expected her, instead, we got her father instead, who took the stand and he explained why it was quite likely if his daughter would repay her boyfriend, Nathan Wade in cash.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN FLOYD, FATHER OF FANI WILLIS: It is a black thing, OK? You know, I was trained and most black folks, they hide cash or they keep cash. And I was - - you know, I was trained, you always keep some cash.

HARRIGAN (voiceover): Fani Willis's father also backed her timeline that Nathan Wade became her boyfriend, only after he was hired.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Did you ever meet Mr. Wade in the year, 2019?

FLOYD: Absolutely not.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: How about in the year, 2020?

FLOYD: Absolutely not.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Do you ever see Mr. Wade at Miss Willis's Fulton County house in the year 2021?

FLOYD: Never.

HARRIGAN (voiceover): As for the defense's star witness, no bombshells there. It appears he couldn't even remember ever seeing Willis and Wade together socially.

STEVE SADOW, TRUMP ATTORNEY: Did Mr. Wade prior to November 1st of 2021, ever talk to you about socializing with Miss Willis?

TERRENCE BRADLEY, NATHAN WADE'S FORMER BUSINESS PARTNER I can't recall.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HARRIGAN (on camera): The judge expects a decision anytime in one to two weeks. He could remove both of them for probable cause. Back to you, Shannon.

BREAM: Steve, thank you very much. We want to take you now to Florida where former President Trump is speaking out about the verdict against him. That $350 million plus. Let's listen in.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: You know the fact that I will get Trumped -- I will get Trump. Everybody has seen it, Letitia James. They've all seen it.

Well, we'll be appealing, but more important than that. This is Russia, this is China, this is the same game. All comes out of the DOJ. It all comes out of Biden. It's a witch hunt against his political opponent, the likes of which our country has never seen before. You see it in third-world countries, banana republics, but you don't see it here.

So, I just want to say this. You build a great company. There was no fraud. The banks all got their money, 100 percent. They love Trump. They testified that Trump is a great. Great customer, one of our best customers. They testified beautifully. And the judge knows that. He's just a corrupt person.

And we knew that from the beginning. We knew it right from the beginning because he wouldn't give it to the commercial division. This judge thought Mar-a-Lago is worth $18 million, that it's worth anywhere from 50 to 100 times that amount.

So, we realized that. He ruled against me before he even got the case. He ruled against me, said I was guilty, he didn't know what I was guilty of, before even got the case.

And Leticia James, that's another case altogether. She is a horribly corrupt attorney general, and it's all having to do with election interference. There were no victims, because the banks made a lot of money, they made $100 million. And by the way, I paid approximately $300 million in taxes. As the migrants come in, and they take over in New York, I paid over this period of years, over $300 million in taxes. And they want me out.

Low, let's see if we can get them out. These are radical left Democrats, they're lunatics, and it's election interfering. So, I just want to thank you for being here. We'll appeal, we'll be successful, I think, because frankly, we're not successful. New York State is gone, people are moving out of New York State.

And because of this, they are going to move out at a much faster rate. They use the statute, it's a consumer fraud statute that's never been used for a thing like this before. They used it on me, because I'm running for president. I'm beating Biden by a lot.

We're beating not only the Republicans. We're beating Biden by a lot. The poll came out today, we're up 20 points in Biden.

If I weren't running, none of this stuff would have ever happened. None of these lawsuits would have ever happened. Nothing would -- I would have had a nice life. But I enjoy this life for a different reason. We're going to make America great again.

These are corrupt people. These are people that shouldn't be allowed to do the things they do. And they are using this says weaponization against a political opponent who is up a lot in the polls, and always will be because I'm competing with a man who can't put two sentences together, who doesn't know what he is doing. And we're heading into a Third World War because of this guy.

We have to win this election. They are doing everything possible to step in a way, but we're not going to stand for it. So, thank you very much. We will get back to work. It's a ridiculous work, a fine of $355 million for doing a perfect job, for having paid back alone with no defaults, with no problems.

The banks were totally -- you know, at the trial, they testified. We had an expert witness from the Stern School at NYU that made the statement. He -- and I was very honored by his statement. He is one of the most respected people anywhere in the country for doing this kind of thing -- expert wisdom. He said this is one of the greatest financial statements I have ever witnessed before. And he talked about even the detail.

So, my numbers actually were extremely conservative. They saw this. So, what the judge did is he brought down certain values like Mar-a-Lago, made it ridiculous. But the expert, after having all of this, testified it's one of the best financial statements he's ever seen. And I was honored by that.

But I also knew we have a corrupt judge. He is not a respected man. And again, I said before, he's been overturned on this case by the Appellate Division four times already. It's a record. Nobody's ever been overturned, on one case four times.

And I think very importantly, and I think, ultimately, the most important, we've employed tens of thousands of people in New York, and we pay taxes like few other people have ever paid in New York. And they don't care about that. They -- it's a -- it's a state that's going bust.

It's a state that's going bust because everybody is leaving. And it's all headed up by Biden, who's destroying our country.

So, this is Russia. This is China. This is what you've been reading about all your lives, and it's happening right here in our country.

Thank you very much. We will stop it. We will make America great again. You have my word. Thank you very much.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

BREAM: All right. You've been listening in reaction from the former president to the massive -- I think most people would say, by any standard court case against him, $350 million, barring him from business in New York for some period of time, his sons and other Trump company executives as well.

You heard from the New York attorney general just moments ago. You've heard from both sides and now goes to appeal. We'll see what happens next.

"BREAKING TONIGHT," you are looking live at a protest outside the Russian embassy here in Washington. There is global outrage over the death of one of Russia -- of Russian President Vladimir Putin's harshest critics.

Moscow says Alexey Navalny died in a penal colony near the Arctic Circle. President Biden says Putin is to blame.

Correspondent Alex Hogan has reaction tonight from London.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Make no mistake, Putin is responsible for Navalny's death.

ALEX HOGAN, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT (voiceover): Russia's most significant opposition leader, Alexey Navalny has reportedly died in prison. While Navalny's team says it's received no proof, prison officials claimed the 47-year-old died after collapsing, losing consciousness, and that medical workers were unable to resuscitate him. World leaders quickly questioned how it all happened.

KAMALA HARRIS, VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Whatever story they tell, let us be clear, Russia is responsible.

HOGAN (voice over): This is the last known footage of the 47-year-old seen looking more gaunt month after month at the penal colony north of the Arctic Circle, one of Russia's toughest jails.

His wife, Yulia, while at the Munich Security Conference today, spoke about her husband's death, saying getting on stage is what he would have done.

YULIA NAVALNAYA, WIFE OF ALEXEY NAVALNY (through translator): I want them to know that they will be punished for what they have done with our country, with my family, and with my husband.

HOGAN (voiceover): Navalny was the lawyer turned politician. It was about a decade ago when he gained attention leading anti-Kremlin demonstrations, condemning corruption and running for office. In 2020, Navalny fell ill from a suspected Russian poisoning, which the Kremlin still denies.

Western countries pointed to a military-grade nerve agent. He was evacuated to Germany and hospitalized in a coma. Recovering, he returned to Russia in 2021, despite global concern for his safety.

Navalny was almost immediately arrested on charges, which were widely viewed as politically motivated. That year, President Joe Biden was asked what would happen if Navalny were to die in jail?

BIDEN: I made it clear to him that I believe the consequences of that would be devastating for Russia.

HOGAN (voiceover): Today, Biden responded to his very own words.

BIDEN: That was three years ago. In the meantime, they faced a hell of a lot of consequences. They have lost and or had wounded over 350,000 Russian soldiers they've made into a position where they've been subjected to great sanctions across the board, and we're contemplating what else could be done.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

HOGAN: Navalny's family and team say that they have yet to be contacted by the prison. Any officials are given any proof about his death. Still, they are calling this a political assassination. Navalny's death comes about a month before Russian elections are set to take place and Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to win a fifth term. Shannon.

BREAM: We will talk about it with the panel. Alex, thank you very much.

Up next, the release of an interview transcript of a prominent former Hunter Biden business associate, we've got the revelations.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BREAM: Tonight, we're seeing a transcript of an interview with a former business associate of Hunter Biden as the House continues its investigation into the Biden family business practices. Tony Bobulinski insists Joe Biden was involved in his son's business ventures. The President denies it.

Also tonight, fallout from the news an FBI informant, who is key to the investigation, is under federal indictment. Correspondent David Spunt is at the Justice Department tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Tony, what's your message to the --

DAVID SPUNT, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT (voiceover): New details from a marathon interview with former Hunter Biden business associate Tony Bobulinski who told House impeachment investigators that Joe Biden was more than a participant in and a beneficiary of his family's business, he was an enabler despite being buffered by a complex scheme to maintain plausible deniability. He told investigators he personally met Joe Biden twice in 2017 and discussed business despite Biden family denials.

The transcript release comes just one day after authorities arrested and charged a former FBI informant, Alexander Smirnov with lying about allegations that both Joe and Hunter Biden each accepted $5 million in bribes from Ukrainian associates. Top Republicans cited the claims for months.

REP. ELISE STEFANIK (R-NY): A highly credible FBI source alleges that Joe Biden received $5 million in exchange for pressuring for the firing of a Ukrainian prosecutor who was investigating the Ukrainian natural gas firm that Hunter Biden was on the board of, Burisma.

SPUNT (voiceover): The President asked today about Smirnov's indictment.

JOE BIDEN, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: He is lying and it should be dropped. And it's just been -- it's been an outrageous effort from the beginning.

SPUNT (voiceover): House Oversight Committee Chairman James Comer is still pressing forward with the impeachment probe telling Fox News, bank records and witness testimony reveal Joe Biden knew about and participated in his family's business schemes and he has repeatedly lied to the American people.

Hunter Biden's attorney, Abbe Lowell, tells Fox News of the Smirnov indictment, "This is just another instance of Chairman Comer and Jordan peddling falsehoods based on dishonest, uncredible allegations and witnesses."

(END VIDEOTAPE)

SPUNT (on camera): Hunter Biden is still facing, Shannon, federal criminal charges in California related to allegedly not paying taxes and in Delaware for allegedly lying on a federal form to purchase a gun. As of now, both of those appear to be headed toward trial. Shannon?

BREAM: David Spunt, thank you very much.

SPUNT: Thank you.

BREAM: Stocks were down today. The Dow lost 145. The S&P 500 was off 24. Nasdaq fell 131. For the week, the Dow lost a 10th of a percentage points. The S&P 500 was down four-tenth. Nasdaq finished off one and a third.

House Education and Workforce Committee Chairwoman Virginia Foxx has issued subpoenas to multiple leaders at Harvard University. She's accusing them of failing to produce documents related to the committee's Antisemitism investigation. Harvard responds by saying the subpoena was unwarranted.

It says, it is committed to cooperating with the committee and will continue to provide additional materials. It says, it must also protect the legitimate privacy, safety, and security concerns of its community.

Health officials in Gaza say five patients in intensive care died after their oxygen ran out in southern Gaza's main hospital that was stormed by Israeli troops. Soldiers were searching the complex where the military says it believes the remains of hostages abducted by Hamas might be located. Israel says it detained dozens of people, including some allegedly involved in the October 7th massacre.

New images indicate Egypt is building a wall and is leveling land near its border with the Gaza Strip. This comes ahead of a planned Israeli offensive targeting the border city of Rafah. Egypt has not publicly acknowledged the construction. It has repeatedly warned Israel not to forcibly expel the more than 1 million Palestinians now displaced in Rafah across the border into Egyptian territory.

Up next, President Biden has one less problem to worry about in his reelection campaign. We'll explain.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BREAM: President Biden will not have to worry about a third-party challenge from West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin. We learned today, Manchin says he will not make a run for the White House. It comes on a day when the President finally fulfilled a promise to visit the site of a devastating train derailment that happened last year.

Lucas Tomlinson reports from the White House tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

LUCAS TOMLINSON, FOX NEWS CHANNEL CORRESPONDENT (voiceover): President Biden continues to face questions about his age and mental acuity in the wake of the special counsel's report. But one question he no longer faces, will Joe Manchin challenge him in 2024.

SEN. JOE MANCHIN (D-WV): I will not be seen a little party run. I will not be involved in the presidential run.

TOMLINSON (voiceover): The West Virginia Senator had said in November he would not seek reelection. Feeling speculation, he would run for president as an independent or third-party candidate. Manchin recently attended several events run by No Labels, the political group attempting to mount a bipartisan centrist challenge. The group said in a statement, quote, "No Labels is currently speaking with several exceptional leaders about serving on the presidential unity ticket."

Another question plaguing the president, would he go to East Palestine, Ohio?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Mr. President!

TOMLINSON: Biden arrived in East Palestine Friday afternoon, more than a year after the toxic train derailment there, and met with first responders.

JOE BIDEN, (D) PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: Let me be clear. While there are acts of God, this was an act of greed that was 100 percent preventable.

TOMLINSON: Some people who live in the town who overwhelmingly voted for Donald Trump in 2020 say Biden should have come sooner.

RUSSELL MURPHY, EAST PALESTINE, OHIO, RESIDENT: He should have come here way, way long time ago and had a gameplan. It's been a year, a year, over a year.

TOMLINSON: Republican frontrunner and former president Donald Trump visited East Palestine less than two weeks after the derailment. Trump posted to Truth Social this week, "Biden should have gone there a long time ago. For him to go now is an insult to those who live and work in East Palestine." The White House says the town's mayor invited the president, but even he criticized the administration's response, saying the best time for Biden to come would be on his book tour in 2025.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

TOMLINSON (on camera): Biden will spend the President's Day weekend at his home in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, before flying out west next week to visit Los Angeles for the second time this month as well as San Francisco for some more fundraisers. Shannon?

BREAM: By the way, Lucas, the White House apparently not pleased with the coverage of the special counsel's classified documents report. A lot of back and forth. What can you tell us tonight?

TOMLINSON: That's right, Shannon. White House Spokesman Ian Sams firing off an angry letter to reporters here at the White House saying its coverage of the special counsel's report was misplaced, saying it brought more execute any to the president's age and mental fitness. Sams writing, quote, "It is also clear that the special counsel's false and inappropriate personal comments have distracted from due attention to the substance." And the White House Correspondents Association, the president firing off a letter back to Sams, saying Ian Sams's comments were misdirected. Shannon?

BREAM: Lucas Tomlinson at the White House, thank you.

Tonight, the Justice Department is responding to a request from Congress to release the transcript of the interview between Special Counsel Robert Hur and President Biden. The department told Congress in a letter obtained first by FOX News it would begin the process of looking at potential classified information discussed. The department says it will ultimately leave the decision up to the White House to see if there are any objections.

Several suspects in the beating of two New York police officers were in court today. Correspondent CB Cotton shows us from Manhattan criminal court tonight.

(BEGIN VIDEO TAPE)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: How do you plead, guilty or not guilty?

CB COTTON, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Five suspects arraigned back-to-back for their alleged roles in the assault on a pair of New York City officers. All of the men pleaded not guilty. Prosecutors say four have been in the states for less than a year, and in court it was revealed one was supposed to be deported a year ago.

The judge citing the criminal records of suspects Yorman Reveron and Yohenry Brito when ordering both men to jail on bail. Prosecutors say Brito, on the left, resisted arrest, causing the brawl to begin. And suspects Kelvin Servita-Arocha and Wilson Omar Juarez have now been linked by ICE to a violent Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua. The two men have pending immigration cases. The judge ordered both held on bail, and keeping them in the system means they won't be deported.

This as New York City officers were warned this week Tren de Aragua is expanding its ranks in the city. Images of these tattoos were shared as possible science of alliance with the gang.

CESAR PAZ, FORMER FBI SPECIAL AGENT: They are engaging in murder for hire, drug trafficking, gun running, human smuggling.

COTTON: Retired FBI special Cesar Paz says the group got its start in a Venezuelan prison. Now he fears the group's acts of violence in the states are just beginning.

PAZ: They are so violent and they have connected and formed alliances with other criminal organizations here in the U.S. and also overseas.

(END VIDEO TAPE)

COTTON (on camera): Law enforcement in Chicago, Miami, and now New York have all linked Tren de Aragua members to crimes in their cities. The FBI says it's actively sharing intelligence on the gang. Shannon?

BREAM: CB Cotton, thank you.

Authorities in Kansas City are charging two juveniles over Wednesday's deadly shooting at the Kansas City Chiefs Super Bowl celebration. The Jackson County family court says the suspects are currently at the juvenile detention center on gun-related and resisting arrest charges. One person was killed, 22 others injured.

Up next, Bret Baier talks with FOX News senior strategic analyst, retired General Jack Keane, about the war in Ukraine and the battle in Congress over funding it.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BREAM: President Biden says it is outrageous that House Speaker Mike Johnson began the chamber's recess without taking up the Senate passed foreign aid bill. That measure includes funding for the Ukraine resistance against Russia.

This evening, my colleague Bret Baier speaks with FOX News senior strategic analyst, retired General Jack Keane, about the situation here in Washington and on the ground in Ukraine.

BRET BAIER, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: Shannon, thank you. Tonight we're going to talk about the foreign aid package and the pitch to get aid to Ukraine, to Israel, and for Taiwan. It's now sitting with the House. Take a listen to President Biden on Tuesday making that pitch urgent.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOE BIDEN, (D) PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We have all seen the terrible stories in recent weeks -- Ukrainian soldiers out of artillery shells, Ukrainian units rationing rounds of ammunition to defend themselves, Ukrainian families worried that the next Russian strike will permanently plunge them into darkness or worse. America stands up for freedom. We stand strong for allies. We never bow down to anyone, and certainly not to Vladimir Putin.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BAIER: With that, let's bring in our FOX News senior strategic analyst, retired General Jack Keane. General, great to see you. Your thoughts about where this stands? There's a lot of skepticism on the Republican side especially when it comes to Ukraine aid, sometimes on the progressive side when it comes to aid for Israel. As it's standing there, where is it militarily as far as the Ukrainians and their need?

GEN. JACK KEANE (RET), FOX NEWS SENIOR STRATEGIC ANALYST: Yes, well, certainly where the Ukrainians are right now, given all of the premonition they have about whether this funding is coming through or not, they are pretty much hunkering down, husbanding their resources as much as they possibly can. The Russians are going to make a move at Avdiivka soon, and also a little bit in the vicinity of Kharkiv as a result of that. So there has already been a momentum shift to the advantage of the Russians.

What this is about it not just, in my judgment when it comes to Ukraine, the survival of Ukraine. It's really critically important in terms of vital national security interest to stop Russia, to stop Russia from seizing Ukraine, establishing military bases right there on the border of Poland and Romania, and then doing what they have already begun to do, which is setting the conditions for hybrid warfare in eastern Europe, which are NATO countries. They are setting conditions in the Baltics similar to what they did in Crimea right now, with Russian minorities coming up with a falsehood we need Russian help to come in here and deal with the oppression that we're dealing with.

Those -- that condition setting has begun. And why is that? Because Putin believes the United States lacks the political resolve both at the national level and congressional level to see this war through. So he is in for the long haul here, and he really thinks the advantage is going to swing to him as the United States takes a knee, and eventually Europe will do the same.

BAIER: If you look at the map from 2023 to 2024, you see that there's not a lot of movement on the front lines, at least as we can see on the map of control. And that's part of the pitch by critics, to say that this is a stalemate. It should be a negotiated settlement right now, and that this money is going for other things and not just the war. It's going for pensions and funding government bureaucrats in Ukraine, et cetera.

KEANE: Yes. Well, that's just a falsehood to begin with. I mean, first of all, Putin doesn't want to negotiate a settlement. He sees the advantage on his side militarily and politically. And he is going to pursue that advantage, certainly.

Secondly, I mean, we know full well, you've documented it here on FOX, that the majority of this money, the $60 billion that is earmarked for Ukraine, goes to the U.S. defense industry to replenish the stocks that we have already given up and for the future. And that benefits jobs in the American defense industry. So, it's not going for pensions or anything like that. It's earmarked specifically for weapons.

And the reality is, when you look at that map, I think it's great that you point that out. And what did we learn about 23? The Ukrainians tried to do a big operation, a major counteroffensive to defeat Russia and take the south and then force them out of Crimea. And when we look back on that, we made some serious mistakes here.

One, we handcuffed them with not giving them all the equipment needed when they needed it. And they needed a lot of specialized equipment to get through the Russian obstacles. The second thing is, the U.S. and NATO advisers, they themselves admit this. I have had a long discussion with the supreme allied commander on this very subject. And he said, we asked them to fight U.S. NATO doctrine against the Russians when they are not ready for that. And we should have really recognized what are their strengths and not try force them into what our strengths are. And if they are going to get a redo of this, and hopefully they will, they will fight this very differently in dealing with the Russians, maximizing their capabilities.

I firmly believe, and as does the Institute for the Study of War, if given the weapons when they need them in this coming year, the Ukrainians do have the opportunity to take back more territory, not in a big operation to win everything, but in much smaller decentralized operations that play to their advantages and exposing Russia's vulnerabilities and weaknesses.

BAIER: We'll see what happens on Capitol Hill. In five days after the war started, a lot of people thought Ukraine would be folding. It is coming up on two years next week. General, we always appreciate your time. Thank you.

KEANE: Yes, great talking to you as always, Bret.

BAIER: Shannon, we'll send it back to you.

BREAM: All right, thank you, Bret. Thank you, General.

Up next, the panel on former President Trump's legal cases, how they are playing on the campaign trail. Plus the death of Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

LETITIA JAMES, (D) NEW YORK ATTORNEY GENERAL: Donald Trump may have authored "The Art of the Deal", but he perfected the art of the steal. This long-running fraud was intentional, egregious, illegal.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT: She campaigned on the fact that I will get Trump, I will get Trump. She is a horribly corrupt attorney general, and it's all having to do with election interference.

MATTHEW WHITAKER, FORMER ACTING ATTORNEY GENERAL: Whether it's the Biden DOJ, whether it's the Democrats in New York, or whether it's the Democrats in Atlanta, in each and every case there is always someone that is his political opponent.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BREAM: All right, let's take it to our panel, Ben Domenech, editor at large for "The Spectator" and host of "The Ben Domenech Podcast" on FOX News Radio, Vince Coglianese, WMAL Washington talk radio host, and Julia Manchester, national ***politics*** reporter for "The Hill."

We've all had whiplash today, so let's start with the latest big story, which is this ruling that I think what you start to accrue some interest maybe north of $400 million President Trump and the other defendants in this case. He says it's all political and they're going to appeal.

BEN DOMENECH, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: I mean, it is obviously all political, and they are going to appeal, and I think that actually if you adopted this judge's stance toward the Trump business plan and every way that they approached had different loans, then you would ruin real estate as a business in New York City. I don't think that this is a situation where we should put any stock in the verdict. But I do think it's going to be a challenge for him to navigate, and he has a very short timeline in order to be able to find the kind of money to put up in order to continue that challenge. It's one more thing that's going to be a drag on him as he continues his campaign.

BREAM: I want to put up a poll. We had polling this week out of Michigan and out of North Carolina. This is Michigan when people were asked, these are Trump supporters, how much would the legal issues make you rethink your support? Sixty percent not at all, 16 percent say not very, 15 percent somewhat. Julia, how does this play now in the middle of an election campaign?

JULIA MANCHESTER, NATIONAL ***POLITICS*** REPORTER, "THE HILL": Well, look, for the GOP primary, I think it's done what Trump's other legal issues have done. It's only strengthened him. It's emboldened him. He, for all intents and purposes, assuming he wins South Carolina, he is the presumptive Republican nominee. So he's going to be galvanized. He's going to get energy from this.

Now, in the general election, I'm not sure how that plays because there is also polling that would suggest that a conviction -- and this wasn't a conviction. It was a loss. But a conviction in a case could play against Trump. There was NBC poll released last week that showed Trump leading Biden by about five points. However, when those same voters were asked about Trump's legal cases and if -- would they still vote for him if he was convicted, then Biden led him by two points. So I think we are talking in hypotheticals, anything could happen. But I think I want to hear how the independent voters are approaching this.

BREAM: And you wonder if they'll hear much from the guts of this ruling today because, Vince, there was a lot of language in there saying that the Trump and defendants, they bordered on the pathological because they wouldn't take guilt with this. They wouldn't admit guilt. They wouldn't take responsibility, which if you think you are not guilty you are not going.

But Jonathan Turley says this, because the case also talked a lot about how he went on and on in the stand, and he went on tirades, according to the judge. Turley says this, "In Trump's case, judges repeatedly hit him with contempt sanctions, struck his testimony, and barred his discussion of certain defenses. With Fani Willis, McAfee politely nudged her to confine her answers and cautioned that the court might have to intervene. He never did. Where Trump was unhinged, Willis was unbowed. Where Trump's rage was threatening, Willis's rage was righteous." So there is these two side by side comparisons, Vince. What are the callers to your radio station saying?

VINCE COGLIANESE, "THE DAILY CALLER": They are saying what I'm saying, which is that a lot of this is just the expression of snarling tyranny happening all across the country, because you have elements of the left that are controlling the levers of power inside of these criminal justice systems who are furious at the idea that Trump could be elected based on the voter support, what Julia was just talking about, this idea voters do support him right now over Biden.

And so what the left is banking on is that they can tell voters, actually, this guy is a convict. Joe Biden, some reporting that Joe Biden is upset that Merrick Garland hasn't accelerated the timetable more quickly to secure a conviction of Donald Trump ahead of the election this very week. You see Jack Smith begging the Supreme Court to move more quickly, implicitly because he wants to do it ahead of the election. And this is very dangerous for this country that our system is being used in such a cartoonishly tyrannical way.

BREAM: And the shocking news this afternoon, we knew it was coming. The number is a bit of a blow to everybody involved in this case. The A.G. says it is fair. Again, accruals of potential interest as well take it over closer to half-a-billion dollars. But the news that struck us this morning was the word of Alexei Navalny's death according to Russian authorities. This is what President Biden said back in 2021 if Navalny died in Russian custody.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: What do you say would happen if opposition leader Alexei Navalny dies?

JOE BIDEN, (D) PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: I made it clear to him that I believe the consequences of that would be devastating for Russia.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BREAM: Ben, what should that mean now?

DOMENECH: You know, in the old days, when the American president said that you shouldn't mess with someone and there would be consequences if you did, it protected them. Now it seems to make them a target. It seems to say that it's actually OK to get away with this.

There are all sorts of different ways that you can respond to this that don't involve American dollars. You can absolutely go after and freeze the more than $300 billion of oligarch available resources and money that exists in Europe today without bothering any American tax dollars. You can, I think, to the point of engaging this on a more severe level, make sure that Viktor Bout doesn't see a sunrise in Russia tomorrow.

But this is the sort of thing that I think demands real moral leadership and it's something that we're not going to get from the Biden White House because time and again they have shown that they are back on their heels when it comes to these moments. When it comes to the kinds of challenges that we have faced in the past as a country, they are not up to the challenge. And it's one of, again, I think an indictment of their whole norms based, rules based, this ridiculous gobbledygook that we heard from Vice President Harris today in Munich. It's not the kind of moral leadership that we need in this moment, and it's not going to result in the kind of policy shifts that we need to respond to this in a way that would truly live up to what Joe Biden promised.

BREAM: All right, a comment from both of you, but you've got about 10 seconds each.

MANCHESTER: Look, in terms of this, I think Putin looks weak in a way in doing this. Navalny was in a penal colony. He was close to the Artic Circle, and then he takes him out? He wasn't commuting with his supporters so much.

COGLIANESE: And I agree with ben. Putin is not intimidated by Biden in any meaningful way. In fact, he announced this week he wants him to be president again, and then he kills Navalny.

BREAM: Well, we will continue to dig into this as what we get from Russian authorities knowing there is much more to this story, always.

Thank you, panel.

It's Friday. Time for "Notable Quotables."

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You're confused. You think I'm on trial. I'm not on trial no matter how hard you try to put me on trial.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: We all know what professionalism looks like, what decorum looks like.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's your understanding that they were in a romantic relationship beginning in 2019?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Were you dating anyone in 2019?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: No, ma'am.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It is a lie.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER U.S. PRESIDENT: Because the other side is incompetent.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Ladies and gentlemen, Long Island is the brightest shade of red.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Despite the dirty tricks, we won!

(APPLAUSE)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I have never seen the nursing home known as the United States Senate work harder than when it comes to spending the American people's money for foreign wars.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Someone has got to crack the champagne with Zelenskyy over this.

BAIER: How serious it is in your eyes when it comes to Russia?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think it's a serious threat.

JOE BIDEN, (D) PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: No other president in our history has ever bowed down to a Russian dictator. I never will. For God's sake, it's dumb, it's shameful, it's dangerous, it's un-American.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Biden or Trump.

VLADIMIR PUTIN, RUSSIAN PRESIDENT (through translator): Biden.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: This deliberate killing, murder of Navalny to demonstrate to his own people don't mess with me.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: But it is very clear that all along Vladimir Putin has been trying to get rid of him, and yet Navalny never stopped.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: You start looking at how often these things are happening across our nation, man, and we're better than this as Americans.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think for everybody that moment, it was that fight or flight. And we had to fight.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

BREAM: Well, Monday on SPECIAL REPORT, while concerns intensify over the age of the president and his main competition, the federal workforce is also getting older. And there may not be enough young people willing to step.

Remember, if you can't catch us live, set your DVR, 6:00 p.m. eastern, 3:00 p.m. on the west coast.

Please join me for FOX NEWS SUNDAY. My guests are South Carolina Senator Tim Scott and New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu, also Colorado Senator Michael Bennet joining us, too.

Thanks for watching SPECIAL REPORT. I'm Shannon Bream in Washington. "THE INGRAHAM ANGLE" is up next.

**Load-Date:** February 17, 2024

**End of Document**