

# [***Interview With Fmr. Gov. Larry Hogan (R-MD); President Biden Targets Abortion Rights; Interview With Pentagon Press Secretary Patrick Ryder; New Hampshire Holds Presidential Primary***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B5K-NXG1-F072-X0KW-00000-00&context=1516831)

Fox News YOUR WORLD WITH NEIL CAVUTO 4:00 PM EST

January 23, 2024 Tuesday

Copyright 2024 Fox News Network LLC All Rights Reserved

**Section:** NEWS; International

**Length:** 7538 words

**Byline:** Alexis McAdams, Mark Penn, Bryan Llenas, Rich Edson, Neil Cavuto

**Guests:** Larry Hogan, Bob Cusack, Patrick Ryder, Jim Merrill, Tom Tillotson, Frank Laukien

**Body**

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's always fun for New Hampshire to have the first-in- the-nation primary.

NIKKI HALEY (R), U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: We have worked New Hampshire hard, and we're excited to see what the day brings.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I like the ideas she has with China and Russia.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Nikki Haley made a lot more sense to me.

DONALD TRUMP, FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES (R) AND CURRENT U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE (R): We have had, I think, more enthusiasm than even the other two races.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He did very well the last time he was president.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He's the only one that's going to correct the madness that's going on in this country.

GOV. CHRIS SUNUNU (R-NH): This isn't the 56,000-vote coronation out in Iowa.

VIVEK RAMASWAMY (R), FORMER U.S. PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: End this primary right here.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

NEIL CAVUTO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: It is the final countdown, the last polls set to close in New Hampshire in less than four hours, make-or-break time for one Nikki Haley.

She needs a strong finish, but Donald Trump hoping after tonight she's just finished, period. And what about Joe? The president isn't even on the ballot. The latest on the frantic rush to write him in before people start to write him off. It's that weird, that big. And, again, that is New Hampshire and it's all going down now.

Welcome, everybody. I'm Neil Cavuto.

So much to get to, so let's get to it with Bryan Llenas in Concord, New Hampshire, on how the voting site there is handling all of this and the folks coming in and out.

To you, Bryan.

BRYAN LLENAS, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Neil, good afternoon.

Well, look, it's steady. That's the latest from New Hampshire's secretary of state in terms of turnout. Polls in New Hampshire close, a lot of them at 7:00 p.m., some at 8:00 p.m. And when I got off the phone with the secretary of state's office, they said, look, it looks like right now it could be, it could reach the estimated 322,000 voter turnout they were estimating, which would be a record high for the Republican primary.

But it's still a little bit too soon to know. Behind me is Ward 4 in Concord, New Hampshire. This is a live look inside of that ward. About 2,600 registered voters vote here. So far, they have had 820 or so voters that have cast their ballot. That's about a 30 percent showing, a little lower than what they expected.

The Haley campaign is hoping for high voter turnout, particularly because she does very well with the independent voters in this state. Now, former Governor Nikki Haley made three stops today at polling locations. She says she's staying in the race, regardless of tonight's result, and had this to say about former President Trump's suggestion that she'd drop out.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HALEY: I don't do what he tells me to do. I have never done what he tells me to do.

(LAUGHTER)

HALEY: Look, I mean, I think -- I don't -- strong. I have always said, we will know strong when the numbers come in. It's not like a certain number. I don't go there and say, oh, I have to have this number, I have to have that number.

I'm a fighter. I work hard. And I do it because I love this country. And we're going to go and fight until the very last poll closes.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LLENAS: Trump stopped at a polling place in Londonderry, New Hampshire.

He said he was feeling very confident about tonight, had this to say about Haley staying in the race.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

QUESTION: ... staying in through Super Tuesday.

TRUMP: I don't care.

QUESTION: Is she a threat to you?

TRUMP: No, no, she -- and I don't care if she stays in. Let her do whatever she wants. It doesn't matter.

QUESTION: Nikki Haley wanted it to be a two-person race, right? I mean, she got that. You think it's going to go in her favor at all?

TRUMP: I think it hurts her, actually. I think it's going to hurt her.

Probably have a big loss today, but who knows.

QUESTION: Once it's done and they drop out and they get behind you, do you forgive those people or are you kind of still mad?

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: I do. I'm a very forgiving person.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LLENAS: Our teams have spoken to voters across the state today. This is what they had to say.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nikki Haley, absolutely. We need some fresh blood in our government.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: Well, believe it or not, the first time Trump ran, I voted for him. But with all the shenanigans and out-of-office actions, I just don't think he's the right guy for the way America needs to go.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: He's a clear winner here. I mean, he's a clear winner there. They're engaging in everything they can to stop Trump. He's the best candidate and he's the only one that's going to correct the madness that's going on in this country.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LLENAS: Haley will speak tonight from right here in Concord, New Hampshire. Then she will head tomorrow to Charleston, South Carolina, where that primary, it's about a month away -- Neil.

CAVUTO: Wow, they just keep on rolling in.

All right, Bryan, thank you for that.

Well, not only are voters and the media watching this race closely. So are donors, particularly Nikki Haley donors, particularly billionaires like Andy Sabin, who was telling me earlier on FOX Business, which, if you don't get, you should demand -- Andy gets it and has demanded it and was on with me today to talk about the high bar he has set for Nikki Haley. Take a look.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ANDY SABIN, NIKKI HALEY DONOR: You know what Custer's last stand is? She must win in New Hampshire, not come in second by two points or one point. In order to be a viable candidate, she must clearly show that she's a winner. She has to win, or I don't think she should go on.

I think it's political suicide to continue for her unless she's a clear winner in New Hampshire, which I think she could be. I wouldn't go by Dixville Notch, because the prediction rate of the six people or nine people has not been great. But this is her last stand. She's a great candidate, and we will have to see how it plays out.

But she -- it's a must-win situation.

CAVUTO: OK, you're referring to the six who've already voted right past midnight in Dixville, New Hampshire.

SABIN: Yes. Yes. Yes.

CAVUTO: And all six voted for her.

SABIN: Yes.

CAVUTO: But you're quite right. That connection is simply not there in the last few elections, to put it mildly.

But having said that, so second isn't good enough, no matter how close? She's got to win outright? And then what do you do, Andy?

SABIN: Neil, do I have a choice? I hate to tell you this. I'm going to support Trump. But you never saw some of my comments in the press about I'm never going to give him another so what nickel.

And although I will support him, I will still not give him any money.

CAVUTO: All right.

SABIN: I'm not comfortable giving money for all his legal battles. And I will support him.

CAVUTO: So, just to be clear, you would support him as the party nominee in that event, but you wouldn't give him any money. That's not happening, right?

SABIN: I won't give him a nickel.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, but he would support Donald Trump if he were eventually the party nominee.

To Frank Laukien right now, a New Hampshire billionaire who is backing Nikki Haley, Independents Moving the Needle, the co-founder.

Frank, good to have you back.

You probably heard what Andy was saying. Do you agree with that, that Nikki Haley has to win outright before she gets another dime?

FRANK LAUKIEN, CO-FOUNDER, INDEPENDENTS MOVING THE NEEDLE: Yes, here's the purple team, the independents moving the needle.

And this is my button that I voted today here in New Hampshire. So I couldn't agree -- I couldn't disagree more. This is the first time we really have a two-person race. And the non-Trump vote for the first time won't be split in terms of attention or vote with Ron or Vivek or Chris Christie.

This is a very good setup for Nikki. And I think the voters really have the opportunity to figure out who is the -- quite honestly, the higher energy, the mental acuity, the -- most importantly, the high-integrity candidate. And that is Nikki Haley.

So I think the next month and the next few months until July will be that one-on-one comparison. And I think Nikki will come out looking like a star.

CAVUTO: All right, what does she have to do today, though? I mean, he is going so far as to say you have to win it to be in it, and coming in second, even a close second, ain't going to cut it. How do you feel?

What would be OK for you?

LAUKIEN: No, I think Ron just dropped out, and he's been relentlessly negative. Now the MAGA and Trump low-integrity campaign is throwing out mischaracterizations and outright lies, hoping that they cannot be contradicted before people go to the primaries.

Hey, I hope that voters in New Hampshire will see right through that.

(CROSSTALK)

CAVUTO: No, Frank, I'm sorry. I wasn't clear with my question. What does it take?

LAUKIEN: Yes.

CAVUTO: That if she has 10 points or more behind, do you still stick with her?

LAUKIEN: Oh, absolutely.

CAVUTO: OK.

LAUKIEN: But I think she will -- we're looking for that strong silver medal, as I said before, Neil.

And I think she has an excellent chance for that. And we will all see. We will know more in a few hours. But for the first time, we have this one-on- one matchup where people really can compare. And I'm very optimistic that she will come out on top in the next few months.

CAVUTO: All right, there are a lot of people who say she has nothing to lose staying in the race. She can be a last candidate standing if anything happens to Donald Trump, if there any convictions on any of these indictments and charges and all.

And there's a benefit for her remaining in the race because no one else is in the race. What do you think of that?

LAUKIEN: Yes, I mean, I don't disagree with that. Yes, I think that makes sense.

But, really, I think -- I hope she has a path to victory, rather than sticking around and see whether something happens to Trump.

CAVUTO: Right.

LAUKIEN: That could happen. But I think she will -- the American people will get to know her that much better.

And she's not running for vice president. That's ridiculous. He wished, but, no, she's not. She's running to be president of the United States.

CAVUTO: All right, could you support Donald Trump if it doesn't work out for her?

LAUKIEN: No, we're the independents. As I said before, I don't need to be in ***politics***.

CAVUTO: All right.

LAUKIEN: I certainly am not in Republican ***politics***. We support next- generation, high-integrity candidates that can get the -- that can solve our problems, rather than just bicker and mischaracterize.

So, no, sir, I will not.

CAVUTO: All right, we will watch it very closely.

Frank, good catching up with you again. I appreciate it.

LAUKIEN: Thank you for having me.

CAVUTO: All right, well, we do know there has been some voting, that it's official, tabulated all six individuals, all of whom went for Nikki Haley overnight just past midnight in Dixville Notch.

That's what gets a lot of attention. It's very iconic every four years. It's like the media world descends. This was what Nikki Haley was saying about that early victory.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

HALEY: Right now, we will take whatever we can take. It was certainly a good start. It gave us some good energy and momentum. And I'm grateful to those six people.

SUNUNU: We're not promising that it's going to be 350,000 to zero, but we're definitely on track for that.

(LAUGHTER)

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, with us now is Tom Tillotson, the Dixville Notch, New Hampshire, town moderator.

Tom, very good to have you and thanks for taking the time.

This is always something I look forward to every four years. I know that it doesn't always translate into the final vote, but it's the first vote and it's the kickoff, the first primary vote in the country. And all six of these individuals went for Nikki Haley. What did you make of that?

TOM TILLOTSON, DIXVILLE NOTCH, NEW HAMPSHIRE, TOWN MODERATOR: I was happy.

Obviously, six to zero, everybody knows who everybody voted for.

(LAUGHTER)

TILLOTSON: And I voted for Nikki Haley and I'm glad all my other residents saw it the same way.

CAVUTO: Now, there used to be a pretty good parallel between the final vote, I think prior to 2012, that was like a pretty good Super Bowl indicator, and then it kind of frizzled away a little bit. So there's no significance to it.

But what do you think of the reception she's getting in New Hampshire on a day a lot of polls seem to be saying Donald Trump could rack up a big victory?

TILLOTSON: Well, I think the important point is what the independent voters will do.

I mean, we only had two independent voters, but they both went for Nikki Haley and chose a Republican ballot. With 40 percent of the electorate, the voters in New Hampshire being independents, that could swing one way or the other and make a big difference that the pollsters just haven't picked up.

CAVUTO: Yes.

Tom, it's a dumb question, but you have endured them, I guess, over time. Why are these vote results tabulated and announced, and not others, as the night and the day ensues, especially the next day?

TILLOTSON: Simply because it's the practical thing to do that New Hampshire law allows. Once 100 percent of your registered voters have voted, you can close the polls. And once you close the polls, you can do the counting, and then after you have counted, you can post it.

We didn't start that.

CAVUTO: All right.

TILLOTSON: That was started back in the '40s with railroad workers that basically had to go to work before the polls could open. So they started doing it at midnight.

CAVUTO: All right.

TILLOTSON: And once you have got everybody voted, why sit around until 7:00 p.m. the next day to finish?

CAVUTO: It makes perfectly good sense to me.

Tom, thank you very much. And good luck. We will see how things go.

TILLOTSON: All right.

CAVUTO: All right, in the meantime, can you believe already after New Hampshire, they're talking about the next big -- the next big event, the next big hurdle, whatever you want to call it? And that is in South Carolina.

Of course, this is Nikki Haley's home state, a two-term governor. A lot of the key players in that state have already come out for Donald Trump. So, she would face enormous pressure there, no matter what happens in New Hampshire now. But that's only a month away, not that we're counting day by day. But it's a month away.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I think that Trump's the only one that can bring this country back.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I think she's the best candidate for everyone in the country and bringing the country together.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I voted for Nikki Haley because Donald Trump really disgraced himself on January 6.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Don't get snowed by Sununu and tricky Nikki. Vote for Trump.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, extreme positions in a state where it's a friendly, feisty back-and-forth to see who will decide and ultimately win this battleground state.

Want to put it in perspective, though. If it gets up to 300,000 or more votes, of course, that's a heavy count, and, of course, participation, we're told, is very, very heavy. But, again, after Iowa, where you had 100,000 people voting, Donald Trump won about 50,000 of those votes.

So when all is said and done, depending on how it all sorts out, you will have about the returns of 400,000 Americans who voted in a country of more than 340 million people. So are we closing this too soon and saying that this race is locked up one way or the other?

Jim Merrill is joining us, the former Marco Rubio for president senior adviser, was the New Hampshire campaign manager for Mitt Romney as well, Mark Penn back with us, former Clinton adviser, Democratic pollster.

Jim, to you first.

For Republicans, to hear a lot of the pollsters tell it, it's the size of the victory for Donald Trump, big enough that he scares off any potential donors for Nikki Haley as well. How likely is that?

JIM MERRILL, FORMER RUBIO CAMPAIGN ADVISER: Yes, I mean, look, that's -- what I'm hearing certainly is people are looking at that likely margin, and they're saying, the larger the margin, the more likely that Haley is going to be forced to drop out, and Trump can go on as the effective nominee.

What I'm hearing from people, though, is, this race, even though we're voting in New Hampshire today, it feels like the race is just getting under way...

CAVUTO: Wow.

MERRILL: With DeSantis dropping out, and Haley is now drawing these much sharper contrasts, I think there are a lot of people that are kind of curious about where this goes.

Let's remember, in 2016, the primary fight went into May. We're in January right now, and so it kind of feels like things are really just warming up. So I think Haley's going to have a solid night tonight, but she's got her home state a month away.

CAVUTO: Yes.

MERRILL: And I think people are inclined, with people I'm talking to, let's see where this goes, and let's give her a shot to come out of New Hampshire and continue to make this case against President Trump.

CAVUTO: Yes, it's tough because the big difference between now and 2016, of course, we're down to one opponent for Donald Trump, not like the half- a-dozen or more that we had back then.

Mark Penn, let me get your thoughts on how important New Hampshire is. I'm thinking of Bill Clinton. He didn't win the state, but he came in a strong enough second after losing Iowa to earn the moniker of the comeback kid, went on to get the nomination, and ultimately the White House.

So, stranger things have happened. So, the expectation game is a little over the top right now. What do you think of that?

MARK PENN, FOX NEWS CONTRIBUTOR: Well, that's right.

I think Bill Clinton lost and declared victory.

(LAUGHTER)

CAVUTO: Right.

PENN: And the press went along with it. His campaign rolled on.

So, I think what we have here is -- I mean, look, my personal estimation more or less, if she gets within five, she can declare victory. If it's 10, I think she has a good case for staying in; 10 to 15, I think it's going to depend on her donors. And she's the only non-Trump candidate standing.

So, she's the only place to put any non-Trump Republican money. So, she probably can keep going. And if it's more than 15, in the 20 range...

CAVUTO: Yes.

PENN: ... it's going to be hard to make a case that she's really going to be able to pull off this nomination.

CAVUTO: Jim, I talked to a one billionaire donor who loves her to death, thinks she's a great candidate. But if she doesn't outright win tonight, he's done with her. He's not going to give her another penny. Now, not everyone shares that view, I know.

But, again, I'm going back thinking of the math here, looking at the numbers and how few have voted. And I know it would be very prohibitive in the next month or so for her to come back from something like that and get support. But a month is an eternity in ***politics***. And look at all the changes we have seen in prior campaigns, where you get into the winter and then the spring and on and on.

One way or the other, too soon to wrap it up and put a cap on this?

MERRILL: I think it is.

I think that we need to take this into context. Nikki Haley started in New Hampshire at 2 percent 10 -- nine, 10 months ago.

CAVUTO: Yes.

MERRILL: And where she is today, within striking distance, is a reflection of the campaign she's run here.

She put time in, effort. She ran the most authentic grassroots campaign in New Hampshire. And so she's at least gotten herself to a position where she's close to Donald Trump, and who came into this as a virtually incumbent with three years to build his case.

And so with two states having voted -- and, of course, ours is finishing voting in a few hours -- her home state a month away,and with questions around Donald Trump about what's happening with his legal matters and everything else, I think it's good for the process, give the other 48 states a chance to start paying attention a little bit here.

Let's see where Haley can go with these sharpened attacks. Let's see where she can go with her home state. Let's let New Hampshire voters speak first and see where we are. But, from my standpoint, I'm looking forward to having this debate about the future of the party continue in the weeks ahead.

CAVUTO: Yes, I just can't fathom -- I'm a numbers guy -- just say, wrap it up now, and we're only like a couple of percentages to all the votes.

Mark, real quickly, Joe Biden is not on the ballot here. If you want him, you have to write him in. It's a convoluted soap opera battle with the party because they have skipped New Hampshire, put the emphasis on South Carolina.

I wonder if that's going to come back to bite the president, who's never had a good track record in this state to begin with, but is making wounds even more sore now. What do you think?

PENN: Yes, I think this was sort of a tactical error. I think they would have been better leaving him on the ballot. And I think he would have been in a good position to win comfortably.

I think now it's sort of made a whole mess of it and gotten everybody in New Hampshire upset and given Nikki Haley more votes, and probably because it's not an official contest, and then same thing at Iowa. I'm not sure they handled it as well.

But, of course, look, there's no better way to get the nomination than not have any contest. And I think they have set it up the way they wanted to.

CAVUTO: But what if it's an LBJ moment for him, the write-in vote is so pathetic, you can have a situation where Congressman Phillips does so well, Marianne Williamson does so well, they eclipse you. All bets are off in that case, right?

PENN: I don't know if bets are off. I just think that because they have already kind of decertified it, I don't think the whole -- you could have an LBJ moment here.

CAVUTO: All right, we will watch that one closely.

Mark Penn, final word. Jim Merrill, great talking to you as well. So, gentlemen, we will see how it all sorts out later on.

In the meantime here, we're getting more updates and details on that joint U.S.-British attack on Houthi rebel sites in Yemen. It was much more involved than we thought.

The read for Major General Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary -- coming up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: You are looking live in Derry, New Hampshire, where the vote is on right now. They're expecting about 322,000 to 325,000 to vote this go- round. That would be 53 percent of eligible Republicans, which would beat the roughly 44 percent who did so in 2016.

We will see.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

CAVUTO: All right, we are learning a little bit more about these joint attacks conducted by the United States and Great Britain on the Houthi rebel sites in Yemen.

With us right now, Major General Patrick Ryder, of course, the Pentagon press secretary.

Secretary, General, very good to have you. What can you tell us about how involved these were? It seems a little bit more involved than we earlier thought.

MAJ. GEN. PATRICK RYDER, PENTAGON PRESS SECRETARY: Yes, thanks very much for having me, Neil.

So what we had last night were multinational strikes conducted by the United States and the United Kingdom, with support from Australia, Bahrain, Canada, and the Netherlands. And these strikes were very specific to target capabilities that the Houthis have been using to conduct attacks against international shipping and mariners in the Red Sea.

So far, our initial assessments are that we had good effects, but we will continue to assess going forward. Again, the goal here is to disrupt and degrade their ability to conduct these kinds of attacks going ahead in the future.

CAVUTO: No, I understand maybe from your briefing earlier, sir, that the U.S. has at this point destroyed and degraded more than 25 missile facilities since January 11.

They have had follow-up attacks. So the fear is, they have got other means or areas from which they can attack us. I know that's sort of like a pinprick strategy. You can't get to all pin sites, but what do you say about their ability to attack U.S. element shipping entrants in the Red Sea now? How much has that been degraded?

RYDER: Yes, so, as you highlight, since January 11, we assess that we have successfully destroyed or degraded over 20 missiles and 25 missile launch and deployment facilities, as well as a variety of other capabilities, to include coastal radars, unmanned aerial vehicles, aerial surveillance and weapon storage areas.

So all of that combines to degrade and disrupt their ability to conduct these kinds of attacks going forward. Now, we do know that the Houthis maintain capabilities, additional capabilities, and would not be surprised if we see other attacks in the future.

But what we're doing here is putting a cost on those attacks and essentially making it very clear that there will be consequences. So, going forward, we will continue to work with the international community to again put this pressure on the Houthis with the ultimate goal being that the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden are safe and secure for international shipping.

CAVUTO: Secretary, today was our first chance to see Lloyd Austin. He delivered virtual remarks in his first public appearance since his hospitalization.

Many have been scrutinized that and wonder, what is his health status? Is he permanently out of the hospital? What can you tell us?

RYDER: Yes, so thanks very much for asking.

Well, the secretary is recovering well. He continues to work from home and perform his duties from there as he recuperates, conducting physical therapy post-hospital. And so we, of course, wish him a speedy recovery and a return to the Pentagon as soon as he can.

But, as you highlight, today was the 18th Ukraine Defense Contact Group, which brought together more than 50 nations to focus on what we need to do to continue helping Ukraine defend themselves against Russia's illegal and unprovoked aggression.

CAVUTO: Secretary, his looks notwithstanding, and some are concerned that he looked still under the weather -- it would be an understatement of someone who was in the hospital as long as he has -- but that he is still, according to you, conducting these operations, not only addressing the Ukraine matter you just alluded to, but these follow-up attacks, joint or otherwise, on Houthi rebels?

RYDER: Yes.

Secretary Austin, of course, resumed his full duties January 5 and has been conducting and actively engaged in departmental operations, leading the department and, as evidenced by last night, continues to stay very actively engaged in implementing the national security policies of our nation.

CAVUTO: So, I'm sorry if I'm slow on the take, sir.

Is he back at his Defense Department offices or is he doing this from home?

RYDER: Yes, again, as I mentioned just a minute ago there, he's continuing to perform his duties from home. And we look forward to him returning to the Pentagon as soon as possible.

CAVUTO: Has there been any discussion of his stepping down?

RYDER: No. Right now, again, he maintains his focus on carrying out his duties as secretary of defense and ensuring that our nation remains safe.

CAVUTO: And the president still has full confidence in him and on these follow-up strikes and all, still confidence in the secretary leading those strikes, commanding those strikes?

RYDER: Yes, thanks, Neil. I'm not going to speak for the president.

CAVUTO: All right.

RYDER: But I think you have heard him and the White House communicate the president's confidence in Secretary Austin.

Again, there are lots of things happening in the world right now, as you have seen, and Secretary Austin remains squarely focused on executing his duties as the secretary of defense and protecting our nation.

CAVUTO: All right, then, finally, sir, on the Houthi rebels and their resilience to a lot of attacks, not all, they are degraded with each and every attack, but not to the point where they're unable to attack.

And that's led many of these shipping lines and oil tanker parent companies who've been with me on my business show to say, pretty much to a man and company, sir, they don't want a risk going back in that area, for fear of this happening again. Even if there's a task force accompanying them, they just don't feel safe.

What do you tell them?

RYDER: Well, certainly, that is a decision that each company needs to decide on its own.

But what you saw here again was the Houthis began to conduct these attacks back in mid-November.

CAVUTO: Right.

RYDER: And despite multiple warnings from many nations, and despite the fact that you had 14 nations, plus the United States issue a statement in early January, warning of consequences, they have made the decision to continue conducting these attacks.

And so there is a cost to that. And, again, our goal here is to ensure that those mariners, that those companies are able to transit this international waterway safely and that the impacts on the global economy are removed.

And so, again, we will continue to stay focused on conducting that mission to turning those attacks should we need to, but one would certainly hope that the Houthis stop, and stop now.

CAVUTO: General, thank you very much, Major General Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary.

Secretary, thank you again.

RYDER: Thanks, Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, in the meantime, it's all ***politics*** today, right, with the attention on New Hampshire and the issue that is gripping that state, which is the border, but it's not the same issue that the White House is emphasizing.

We will explore and explain -- after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I believe his policies are what we need, the border, wall.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: I like what she wants to do for the country. I like her stance on immigration.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, it's a big issue for Republicans in the New Hampshire primary, immigration, the wall, national security there at the border, just as it was in Iowa.

Very odd these are not border states, but nothing bordering on a major issue for them. It is the issue for them. For Democrats, though, and the White House in particular, the president in Virginia today, the emphasis seems to be on an entirely different issue.

Rich Edson has more from Manassas, Virginia -- Rich.

RICH EDSON, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: And good evening, Neil.

Well, the Biden/Harris reelection campaign is going right at the abortion issue. We have got Vice President Harris speaking right now. She will introduce President Biden in just a quick bit here.

But this is a rally here in Northern Virginia that the campaign has billed as highlighting the stakes for the election for a woman's right to make her own health care decision. Harris has already been hitting this issue. She was out in Wisconsin yesterday to begin with the campaign is calling a multistate reproductive freedom tour, reminding voters that then-President Trump's three Supreme Court picks tipped the balance on the court in favor of overturning Roe v. Wade.

Through rallies, TV, digital advertising and swing states, the Biden campaign says it will highlight abortion. It's an issue Democrats say helped galvanize voters and their candidates in the 2022 midterms and in local elections last November.

Now, here in Virginia, Governor Glenn Youngkin campaigned for Republicans to win control of both houses of the state legislature. They lost both. Democrats point out that Republicans had pushed a 15-week abortion ban in that campaign.

Biden and Harris are pushing Congress to pass a bill that would make Roe v. Wade federal law. Around the time the Supreme Court overturned that abortion decision, Democrats tried passing a measure to do so. Republicans rejected it because they say the Democrats bill went further than Roe with no explicit time limits on abortions.

Other Republicans say states should put limits on abortions or decide what to do. Others have said there should be a national standard stopping abortions after a certain number of weeks. Now, here in Manassas, we are about 30 miles from the White House. We are about 500 miles from New Hampshire and the New Hampshire primary.

Remember, Democrats and the Democratic Party downgraded the New Hampshire primary. So President Biden isn't even on the ballot there. They're conducting a write-in campaign there, his supporters, to try to get him at least to win a primary that he's not actively running in.

Remember, it was only four years ago that he finished in fifth place -- Neil.

CAVUTO: Yes, he's always had a devil of a time in the Granite State.

Fascinating stuff, Rich. Thank you very much.

Rich Edson in Manassas with the president and the vice president.

Bob Cusack right now, The Hill editor in chief.

It's interesting. They're going back to the abortion issue. It has worked for them in the last couple of elections, a presidential one. You could argue right now in the midterms that it did. But I don't know if it's a gift that keeps giving for them or this real issue that unites a good many Republicans, to say nothing of Democrats, and that is the border crisis.

I wonder if they're missing a chance to pound that before it pounds them.

BOB CUSACK, EDITOR IN CHIEF, THE HILL: Yes, I mean, listen Republicans in -- certainly in the primary -- and that's why Donald Trump won the presidency. He went hard right on immigration and the border and that helped him certainly in the primary.

And Democrats, they did very well in the midterms better than expected. They lose the House, but just narrowly. So that's something Democrats are going to be talking a lot, but I think it's an interesting point you raised, Neil. Like, how long can that last? Obviously, it's an important issue.

It's so important for Democratic turnout. But how long will it be as -- will it turn out people like it did in 2020, especially 2022? It is their number one issue that they're going to be talking about, I think, more than the economy, because Trump has the advantage on the economy.

CAVUTO: On the economy and all that, it's a big issue in New Hampshire, which is a thriving economic state. If you talk to Chris Sununu, the Republican governor, it's about the Republican leadership in the state and the fact that it's high-tech and all that.

So it might not be a perfect microcosm of other states and how the country is going, but even there a lot of folks are sick of the price increases. They know that inflation has come down from the heights it was, but it's still pretty high and it's not sitting well.

CUSACK: Yes, and people aren't getting their money back. Inflation, as you correctly note, Neil, has gone down, but things are still expensive.

CAVUTO: Right.

CUSACK: And even when they go down, I think there's an inflation hangover that the Biden/Harris ticket has to deal with and make the claim that -- well, at first, I think they really downplayed it and so did the Fed chair.

Now it's more under control, but still the polls are not good in this department. Trump is beating Haley on the economy and beating Biden on the economy.

CAVUTO: What do you think of what the pressure to keep Haley is under to do well?

I mean, I talked to one big donor, who said, no, no, she can't just come in second. It can't be a strong second, and it can't be within 5 percentage points. She has to win outright. Now, not everyone agrees with that. And many of her strongest supporters are saying, keep running, keep running, because you're the only alternative out there right now.

What are you hearing? What do you think of that?

CUSACK: I agree with that donor.

I think she's got to win. If she narrowly loses, OK, she can certainly spin it maybe within five points.

CAVUTO: Yes.

CUSACK: But if she loses by double digits -- and, listen, Trump world is going to -- they're going to pick up the pressure on her to drop out.

And a lot of the Trump surrogates have already called on Haley to drop out. And if she loses by double digits tonight, those calls are going to continue. I do think she's going to continue on to South Carolina, but she's not doing well in South Carolina and could really lose that state by, again, double digits.

CAVUTO: It is still early, to your point, so we will watch it closely.

Bob, thank you very much.

CUSACK: Thanks, Neil.

CAVUTO: Bob Cusack, The Hill editor in chief.

We talk a lot about endorsements and the role that they play. Sometimes, the biggest and most noteworthy endorsements really don't do squat when it comes to the final vote. There are a couple of exceptions, though.

We will explore -- after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nikki Haley, absolutely. We need some fresh blood in our government.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What I liked about President Trump is, he showed us what he could do the first time, and I think he will do it again.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Nikki Haley, absolutely. We need some fresh blood in our government.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: What I liked about President Trump is, he showed us what he could do the first time, and I think he will do it again.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

CAVUTO: All right, well both candidates had a chance to make some last- minute pit stops today, to make one final claim for New Hampshire residents of putting their faith and trust and ultimately vote in them.

Alexis McAdams following both around, including the former president himself -- Alexis.

ALEXIS MCADAMS, FOX NEWS CORRESPONDENT: Hey, Neil.

Yes, we were able to catch up with former President Donald Trump to talk to him about how he's feeling on the ground. He says he's confident and has a lot of support here in the Granite State, but we have also been talking to voters right over the past week or so.

And they tell us it all comes down to the border and the economy when they head to the polls. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

VANESSA THOMAS, TRUMP VOTER: The main issues are definitely closing the border up to keep the United States of America safe.

SYLVIA HORSLEY, TRUMP VOTER: I don't think she's strong enough on the border, for one. I don't think she's good for the economy, for another.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MCADAMS: So, let's take a live look right now, Neil, at these four polling locations here in New Hampshire.

This is kind of what we have been seeing throughout the day, but it has been a steady flow of voters going there throughout the afternoon hours. And voters here take the first-in-the-nation primary seriously.

As that field has narrowed down, Trump says he's winning voters over simply because of his stance on the border and says people really care about those issues here. Watch.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

TRUMP: You have to watch both borders and you have to watch fly-ins. You have to watch everything, but the southern border is like nobody's ever seen, but the northern border is bad too.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MCADAMS: And, Neil, we talked with the former president and asked him, hey, this is a two-person race now. This is what Nikki Haley wanted. Do you think that's going to help her? He simply said, no, she doesn't have a shot here.

So her team continues to try to gain support on the ground, but we're waiting to see the former president out here with lots of supporters later tonight -- Neil.

CAVUTO: All right, Alexis, thank you.

Well, Larry Hogan, the former Maryland governor, a very popular Republican governor in a very blue state, had thrown his support to Nikki Haley, but if that doesn't work out a lot of people are looking to the former governor to see what he's going to do.

We will talk to him next.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I have been to a couple of her rallies, and she's very organized, very meticulous about what she says.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: He's been pretty steadfast all along. He believes in what he believes, and the American people stand behind him.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: A lot of people are endorsing him, back him. I was going to vote Vivek in, but he decided to endorse Trump, so I'm going to stick with that.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: I'm going to go for some change here and go for Nikki Haley. I have long been a supporter of Governor Sununu, and he's been backing her pretty aggressively.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

NEIL CAVUTO, FOX NEWS ANCHOR: All right, all eyes on Nikki Haley tonight. Can she pull it out? Can she do good enough in a second-place finish or maybe win outright?

The pressure's on Larry Hogan, the former Maryland governor, an oddity, in that, a Republican who was very popular in a very blue state for two terms in a row, endorsed Nikki Haley. And now -- well, now she could be in some trouble if early polls are right, but they could be wrong.

Governor, always good to have you.

FMR. GOV. LARRY HOGAN (R-MD): Great to be with you.

CAVUTO: What do you do if Nikki Haley does poorly tonight?

HOGAN: Well, first of all, I'm hoping that she doesn't do poorly. I think she's got a real shot to surprise some people. I think she's going to outperform expectations. They're expecting a really big turnout.

About 40 percent of the state of New Hampshire are registered independents, and I think there's a lot of frustration. So it's about expectations, the margins, how well she does tonight. But I'm still -- for the next three hours, I'm focused on trying to see if we can't get Nikki Haley to do what happens a lot in New Hampshire, which is pull a major upset.

CAVUTO: Does she have to win? I talked to one of her billionaire backers who said, it's not coming in second that matters. You got to win outright.

HOGAN: Well, I think there's a lot of people counting her out completely.

CAVUTO: Yes.

HOGAN: And they're giving kind of false expectations that it's going to look like Iowa. She's not going to get blown out like Iowa. It's going to be -- I think, if she gets pretty close, and it's a second place, that still gives her some momentum.

But, obviously, if she pulled an upset, it gives her all the attention she needs to roll back into her home state of South Carolina. And we're going to know in about three hours or so, but I'm still hoping that she performs better than everybody's talking about today.

CAVUTO: You were once attached to No Labels. You left that maybe with the endorsement of Nikki Haley, but No Labels was looking and talking to you. They want a different type of a candidate if it's down to a repeat of what we had last time, Joe Biden and Donald Trump.

Would you be interested in that, if that were to materialize?

HOGAN: Well, Neil, I understand why they're so focused on it, because there are a little over 70 percent of the people in America who really do not want to vote for Joe Biden or Donald Trump. And they're frustrated with both parties.

There's what I call the frustrated majority, about 40 percent of the people in America now registered independent, just like New Hampshire.

CAVUTO: Yes.

HOGAN: And so I think right now we're focused on what happens in the primary. I'm hoping we can elect a Republican nominee that can beat Joe Biden.

But, yes, the group has certainly been talking about it. I'm flattered that they're mentioning me, but it's not something that I'm really going after or focused on.

CAVUTO: Do you think it could be a moot point, though? Because in some of these polls out lately, Governor, Donald Trump is beating Joe Biden, in one pretty comfortably by five points. Now, that could change, and you remind me of that. But what do you think of that?

HOGAN: Yes, well, I think all along they were saying, look, Donald Trump can't beat Joe Biden. And then now it looks as if it's a very close race.

I think Trump is the -- and Trump is the only one that Biden could beat. Any other Republican, I think, would beat Joe Biden, but I think it's going to be close. It could go either way. And while it looks good right now, the election is not taking place until November. So if he's the nominee, things might be different.

CAVUTO: If you ran something -- and other names that have come up, the conventional argument is that It would take and divide the Republican vote, and it would hand the White House back to Joe Biden. How do you feel about that?

HOGAN: Yes, well, I think it depends on who the candidates are.

CAVUTO: Right.

HOGAN: If it's a credible ticket with a Republican at the top of the ticket and a Democratic running mate -- they're talking about a unity ticket.

CAVUTO: Right.

HOGAN: I think a lot of people could get behind that, and we don't know where it's going to come from.

Look, I -- the only place I have been on the same -- on the ballot together, I ran ahead of Joe Biden and Donald Trump. I ran 45 points ahead of Donald Trump. So we have a good ability to win swing voters and crossover. And that's, I think, why they're expressing interest in talking to me.

CAVUTO: If Nikki Haley loses by a lot tonight, Governor, you think she should still stay in just as a fallback candidate to whatever could happen to Donald Trump?

HOGAN: I think it's really a tough personal decision for her, and it depends on how close the race is.

CAVUTO: Yes.

HOGAN: If it's not close, she's going to have to think long and hard before going down to South Carolina.

But, otherwise, I think she might hang in there as long as she can.

CAVUTO: OK.

We will watch closely. Larry Hogan, former Maryland governor, good seeing you.

Here comes "The Five."

**Load-Date:** January 23, 2024

**End of Document**