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Transcript: Sen. JD Vance on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan," Oct. 27, 2024



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The following is a transcript of an interview with GOP vice-presidential nominee Sen. JD Vance, Republican of Ohio, on "Face the Nation with Margaret Brennan" that aired on Oct. 27, 2024.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Well, thank you for making time for us. The last time we spoke, Iran had just launched a ballistic missile attack on Israel, and this

Friday, Israel did retaliate against Iran. At the debate, I asked you about your position, and you said it's up to Israel to do whatever it is they think they need to do. The thing is is that doesn't address the question of the safety of U.S. military personnel in the region, right now about 43,000 of them. It doesn't address the question of whether the United States, as the largest weapons supplier, should have a say, as they do under U.S. law, as to how those weapons are used. In a Trump-Vance administration, would you keep the troops we have in the Middle East, or would you pull them out, as President Trump tried to do in his first administration?

SEN. JD VANCE: Well, obviously we have a lot of troops in a lot of different parts of the Middle East. I think it's reasonable to support Israel as it deals with this extremely unprovoked attack from Iran. And let's step back a little bit here, because the reason that Iran has all of these weapons to fire at Israel is because they have a lot of money. And where do they get that money from? From the easing of oil sanctions and from the- the release of a lot of money that the Biden-Harris administration had effectively locked up. They released it, and the promise of releasing it is that somehow it would make the Iranians a better partner, would maybe get them a little bit more on the trajectory to being a reasonable country. That's not happening. They're just using that money to buy weapons that they launch against American-

MARGARET BRENNAN: They're tightening up some of the sanctions.

SEN. VANCE: They're- they're- they're tightening them up. They're going in the other direction after making a big mistake, and that big mistake was to empower Iran financially to afford a lot of weapons that they're now firing, not just at the Israelis, but also at us. And they're also arming the Houthis, and that's obviously affecting global trade. So I think the first and biggest mistake, the thing that we need to change, is we need to stop giving the Iranians money that they use to make ourselves and our allies weaker in the region. When we talk- when it comes to Israel specifically, look I don't think that we should be taking assets out of the Middle East at a time when our most important ally in the region is coming under significant attack, I don't think that would send the right message and most importantly, it's not just Israel, it's us. We have

interests that are important in the Middle East. We obviously have to deal with- deal with the Houthis somehow, because we want to reopen the lines of global trade. Very hard to do that if we do a full scale withdrawal, but if there's certain countries where maybe we shouldn't have troops, I'm willing to have that conversation, but you know, you're talking about 14 different theaters, 14 different troop deployments, it's hard to make a broad stroke- broad stroke conclusion about the whole thing.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Well it would be a specific question on Iraq, since the Biden administration said 2026, the year you have to make a decision on troops, do you have a view on that at this point?

SEN. VANCE: On Iraq specifically?

MARGARET BRENNAN: Yes.

SEN. VANCE: No, I mean, look, I think we need to look at the situation. We obviously need to have a conversation with our- our allies in Iraq, and obviously recognize where- what is the direction of Iraq? Are they becoming more and more allies of Iran? Are they becoming a little bit more of a good partner in the Middle East? So it's- it's hard to say what we're going to do two years down the road, because we're not- we don't know what the world is going to look like two years down the road.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Staying on national security, as you know, the FBI and the director of national intelligence on Friday said Russia is behind a fake video that is circulating of someone tearing up ballots in Pennsylvania, the state we're sitting in right now. They assess Russia will release more media like this in the coming weeks. What price should Moscow pay for trying to manipulate American voters?

SEN. VANCE: Well, look, I think a lot of countries are going to try to manipulate our voters. They're going to try to manipulate our elections. That's what they do. I think the bigger question is, what is in our best interest vis-à-vis Russia, not what price Russia should pay for putting out social media videos. And I think what's in our best interest vis-à-vis Russia is in particular for them to stop

supporting the Iranians as the Iranians engage in acts of aggression. And I think when it comes to Europe, it's important for the killing to stop in Russia and Ukraine. I don't think that we should set American foreign policy based on a foreign country spreading videos on social media. I think we should set American foreign policy based on what's in our best interest as a United States.

MARGARET BRENNAN: You don't consider that election interference and crossing a red line?

SEN. VANCE: I think it's bad. I think it's bad. But social media posts and social media videos, Margaret, you want us to go to war because the Russians made a ridiculous video or paid for it?

[CROSSTALK STARTS]

MARGARET BRENNAN: There are options other than war, as you know, sanctions, other measures I mean, that doesn't-

SEN. VANCE: Well, but- but this- this raises a difficult question, Margaret, because every- everything-

MARGARET BRENNAN: Manipulating voters as part of our democracy-

[CROSSTALK ENDS]

SEN. VANCE: Everything that we've tried, a lot of the sanctions that we've tried, they've gone off like a wet firecracker. We promised at the beginning of the Russia-Ukraine war that we would engage in financial nuclear war against the Russians. Biden administration, Harris administration officials talked about how our sanctions would cripple their economy. They didn't. And so we have to be realistic about what America can accomplish, compare it against our national interests and just be smart about this. I don't think that we should overreact to anything. What we should do is encourage our fellow Americans to be careful. Don't trust everything that you see on social media. And of course, we should push back where appropriate. But that's the big question is, what is an appropriate response to a country making social media videos? I'm

not going to make a commitment to that sitting right here.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Do you have full confidence that the state of Pennsylvania and the election officials here are administering this election fairly? Do you foresee litigation in this state?

SEN. VANCE: Look, I think that they're doing a good job. I think they're doing a better job than they were in 2020 and most importantly, I think most Americans are seeing whether it's voter ID in places like Wisconsin or Georgia, or a little bit of tightening of the regulations around signature verification in places like Pennsylvania, that I think our elections are in a pretty good spot in 2024. Obviously, if something comes up, we don't know what the future is going to hold. If we see evidence, for example, of an illegal alien casting a ballot. Yeah, we're going to challenge that in court. But seeing what I- what I see right now, 10 days out from the election, Margaret, I think Pennsylvania is in a really good spot. I think we're going to win the state, and I think Pennsylvanians, Republicans, Democrats, independents, should have confidence in the elections here.

MARGARET BRENNAN: At a minimum, would you call on Moscow to knock it off, to not post videos like this in the coming weeks?

[CROSSTALK]

SEN. VANCE: Well of course. I'd call them to knock it off, but this is not a school yard. I call on Moscow to knock it off, are they actually going to do it? We need to have a real serious conversation with the Russians, but also with ourselves, about what tools of diplomacy and statecraft we have to dissuade the Russians. So yeah, I condemn the Russians for funding fake social media views, but I don't think that my job as a statesman, as a person who wants to be the next vice president of the United States, is to go engage in saber-rattling. My job is to figure out how we can best respond to these threats, and unfortunately, thanks to Kamala Harris's leadership, we're in a much weaker space, vis-à-vis Russia than we were three and a half years ago.

MARGARET BRENNAN: I want to ask you about polling and where we are in

this campaign.

JD VANCE: Sure.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Former Republican Congresswoman Liz Cheney called you and Donald Trump "misogynistic pigs." She urged voters to look at what you have said in the past. And she said of you personally, quote, you've got a real women problem. Do you think your ticket has "a women problem?"

JD VANCE: No, I don't think that we do, but we have to make our best case to women and to men as well as we can. And of course, women and men are going to decide where the chips ultimately fall. I think it's a more interesting reflection of Kamala Harris's campaign, that at this late stage, she's not talking about how she can lower the price of groceries because she raised the price of groceries. She's not talking about how she can lower the price of housing because her policy saw a 40% increase in the cost of housing. She's going to Michigan with Liz Cheney, the person whose father is responsible for the deaths of millions of innocent Arabs and tens of thousands of innocent American troops, and saying, effectively, that if you elect me, I'm going to have the foreign policy of Dick and Liz Cheney. I don't think that message is going to fly in Michigan. I don't think it flies in Pennsylvania either.

MARGARET BRENNAN: They've actually not been talking about foreign policy. They've been talking about things you've been saying. They've been talking about the threats to our democracy, but on the-

[CROSSTALK]

JD VANCE: Oh, Liz Cheney has definitely been talking about foreign policy, Margaret. She loves to talk about how she would like to start wars with effectively every country all over the world. Donald Trump is the candidate of peace, but I think they are talking a lot about foreign policy.

MARGARET BRENNAN: On the- on the topic, though, of- of how the campaign is doing. Our CBS polling shows a significant gender gap here. 40% of women say the Trump campaign is paying too much attention to men's concerns. 56%

of women say the Trump campaign is paying too little attention to women's concerns. You say one of your top advisers is your wife, Usha.

JD VANCE: Yeah. The top adviser.

MARGARET BRENNAN: What is she- So what is she telling you? Because the data says you do have a women problem.

JD VANCE: Well, what she's telling me is we gotta make the case to women as well as we can, and ultimately, trust in the wisdom of those women to make a determination about what's in the best interest of their family. All I can say to women voters, and frankly, to men voters too, but to all Americans, is I think that Donald Trump is the person who's going to lower the cost of groceries. I know that Donald Trump is the person who is going to secure the southern border. Donald Trump has a plan to open up American energy, to lower the cost of goods and to make our neighborhoods and communities safer. I know a lot of women care a lot about the safety of their communities. What does it say about Kamala Harris's leadership that violent crime has gone up? What does it say about the fact that fentanyl overdose deaths have increased under her leadership? I think that we can make a good case to women, but I'm not going to tell them who they have to vote for. I'm going to try to persuade them. The voters are ultimately going to decide.

MARGARET BRENNAN: You took a vow, first as a Marine and then as a United States Senator, to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America. Can you assure the American people that you will do everything you can to stand by that, and to make sure that President Trump abides by the Constitution?

JD VANCE: Of course, but I don't worry about Donald Trump. I think that Donald Trump believes in the Constitution. It's why he's running for president a third time is because he's worried that Kamala Harris has broken the greatest economy in the world, and Donald Trump--

MARGARET BRENNAN: He's talked about suspending it- the January 6 events. I don't have to retread the territory you well know about challenging the

certification of the election.

JD VANCE I think that Donald Trump believes in the American Constitution. I know he does. I've seen it in his actions. I've talked to him about it. But you asked about me, and personally, yes, my first loyalty is to the American people and to the United States Constitution. I think the best way to serve, loyally, to those people and to that Constitution is to get us back in a place where Americans can afford to live a decent life again. That's why we're running the campaign focused on the affordability of goods, American manufacturing- it's a big deal here in Erie, Pennsylvania, and certainly on securing that southern border. I think the threats to our Constitution, Margaret- and I do think they're real. The threats to our Constitution come from Kamala Harris, who's saying that she wants to censor Americans instead of persuade them. Whether you agree with me or Donald Trump or disagree with us, we believe in the First Amendment, we're going to fight for your right to speak your mind and think whatever you want in the United States of America.

MARGARET BRENNAN: We are out of time, but just to put a fine point on it, do you believe Vice President Harris, who will preside over the election certification in January, that she has the power to ask for alternate electors? Because you claimed Mike Pence did.

JD VANCE: What I think Vice President Harris has the power to do is to enforce the Constitution. I'll leave it to her what she thinks that she has to do. But Donald Trump and I are going to win this election. He's going to be the president again, and he's going to fix what Kamala Harris has broken. And thank God for that, because I just want Americans to live a better life.

MARGARET BRENNAN: Senator Vance, you have a busy schedule. Thank you.

JD VANCE: Thank you. Appreciate it.

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In: JD Vance

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