

# Transcript: A Discussion with Senator Ted Cruz

FEATURING TED CRUZ, FRED FLEITZ  
AND VICTORIA COATES



**Fred Fleitz:** Welcome to this special Center for Security Policy webinar with Senator Ted Cruz. My name is Fred Fleitz, I'm president of the Center for Security Policy. Standing with the State of Israel, defending the US Israel relationship is a very high priority for this organization. And it is more important now than ever. It's more important since the beginning of the year after Hamas fired over 4000 missiles in Israel, where we're seeing violence against Jews in the State of Israel. And as we see an administration pushing policies that are hostile to Israel, and appear to be repeating the same mistakes of the Obama Administration. An Iran based foreign policy, there's real trouble for [inaudible 00:00:51] now. So we're so lucky to have a real champion of Israel, one of the most outspoken champions of Israel in the senate with us today to talk about these issues. Senator Cruz has represented the great state of Texas since 2013.

He has fought for unlimited government economic growth, the Constitution, but he understands the value of freedom from his family experience, because his father, Raphael, was imprisoned and tortured in Cuba. So when this man speaks out our freedom and liberty, he speaks from the heart. He's also long been a voice in the Senate for pro Israel initiatives such as moving the US embassy to Jerusalem, defending the Iron Dome missile defense system that probably saved 1000s of lives during the recent missile attack. And he has been very, very strong in defended US Israel relationship. Senator, I am so honored you're here today. Thank you.

**Ted Cruz:** Fred, thank you for having me. It's an honor to join you.

**Fred Fleitz:** I'm also honored to welcome my friend and colleague Dr. Victoria Coates. Dr. Coates has an extensive resume and I can't get into all of it here today. During the Trump administration, she was a Deputy National Security Adviser for Middle East and North African Affairs. She was a senior advisor to the Secretary of Energy. But most important for our purposes today, she's a former senior foreign policy advisor to Senator Cruz. I'm happy to say that until now, Victoria had been a senior fellow with the senator. But she, as a July 1, will be heading a new program on the Middle East in North Africa. This is going to be a major effort we have to ramp up our efforts to talk about Middle East security, the US Israel relationship, the BDS movement, anti Semitism, and the growing threat from Iran.

But in mentioning Victoria, one thing I do want to say, we wouldn't know about her and the NSC wouldn't know about her if Senator Cruz hadn't hired her and promoted her in his office. And the senator realizes as I do, there are not enough women in National Security jobs. And your leadership made her available to us and to the Trump administration. And I thank you for that, Senator.

**Ted Cruz:** Well, I appreciate that. But I have to actually correct the record somewhat, in that I was only the very fortunate beneficiary of her expertise. And one of my favorite Victoria stories, if you were to say one of the first really prominent people to discover her insight, it would be Don Rumsfeld.

**Victoria Coates:** His picture is over there, actually two up from yours.

**Ted Cruz:** Oh, awesome. Well, he had enough iterations that he could have [crosstalk 00:03:33] it in his 30s

and his 70s, done it multiple times. But when Rumsfeld was Secretary of Defense, he was reading the posts by this anonymous blogger.

**Victoria Coates:** Not a nice word.

**Ted Cruz:** That were insightful, that really understood foreign policy, national security policy. They were just standing out over and over again. And he asked his staff, he said, find out who this is. And he said, Look, it's clearly some Colonel deep in the bowels of the Pentagon that knows inside and out. Find that guy. And it turned out that guy was an art historian.

**Victoria Coates:** From Philadelphia.

**Ted Cruz:** From Philadelphia, and she went and then helped Secretary Rumsfeld work on his book, and the rest went from there. But you too as an anonymous blogger, can someday defend liberty and change the world.

**Victoria Coates:** It was an unusual path. As I was getting to work for you, one thing I wanted to mention is, I went down to the Senate for two weeks on a part time basis, because Senator Cruz was not planning on doing a great deal in the national security realm. So my old friend Chip Laurie called and said, Do you want to come down for the Kerry and Hegel nominations? The Kerry vote was a very proud moment. I was actually not sure when he left the office, how he was going to vote, because if you recall for Kerry to be Secretary of State, McCain wanted it to be 99 to nothing in favor. And he knew it was pretty hard, as I recall. And he came back and I said, How'd to go? And he said, Well, it was 94 to three. I said, You made friends. And we then knew we were on the same page and had some really extraordinary times in the Senate, and being carried on by my esteemed colleagues in the back.

And I hear that there were some fireworks today that I do want to get to, in a moment. Making friends again on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. But first, I wanted to invite you to talk a little bit about your trip. I think where we were in terms of the relationship with Israel, on January 19 2021, and where we are today, four months later. Even I have whiplash. I mean, I expected a change, I didn't expect this. And so we have now the rumblings of reopening some kind of counseling to the Palestinians in Jerusalem, what that means for Jerusalem. And just your observations on the trip?

**Ted Cruz:** Well, sure. Let me briefly observe, Victoria brought up the story from our opening days in the Senate. I actually found the John Kerry vote staggeringly easy. The fact that I didn't share with her how I was going to [inaudible 00:06:23] was agonizing in the slightest.

**Victoria Coates:** I didn't imply that.

**Ted Cruz:** Look, John Kerry is someone who's managed to be spectacularly wrong on every foreign policy issue for 50 years. That's actually hard to do. If you know nothing else about any foreign policy issue, ask what is John Kerry's view, inverted 180 degrees, and you probably have the right answer. And I did think it spoke volumes

that when Kerry came by my basement office as a brand new freshmen to talk to me about his being Secretary of State, he tried to convince me to support the law to Sea Treaty, and give up US sovereignty to a transnational organization. I just chuckled like, You don't know me very well, do you? And Victoria didn't mention, we then proceeded to lead the first successful filibuster on the defense secretary in history with Chuck Hegel. So that was a ...

**Victoria Coates:** Another problem.

**Ted Cruz:** We were immediately in the midst of battles, and then they haven't ceased since then. On Israel, as Victoria mentioned, I got back just a couple of weeks ago from Israel, and went right after the Hamas rocket attacks. The trip was terrific. I wanted to go right after those rocket attacks to show American solidarity with Israel I spent a day down in the Gaza border, meeting with IDF soldiers, visiting an Iron Dome missile battery, visiting a home that had been bombed by Hamas where a woman had been killed. The next day meeting with multiple Israeli leaders. As it so happened, I was there on a Wednesday and the Wednesday was the day Naftali Bennett and the new government was filing that evening. And so I was meeting with Bibi the afternoon the new government was filing, and when we sat down I tried to get Bibi. I said Look, I recognize today is a really busy day, so if you want to cut this short, if you need to be on the phone to other members of the Knesset, that's fine. I'm happy to cut this short.

I think Bibi knew it was a done deal, because we spent an hour and a half sitting there discussing the world and I think it's fair to say his sentiments were exercised. I don't think I'm breaching too much confidence with that. I think it's worth stepping back for a minute. And Victoria, your question alluded to this. Contrasting where we were last year to where we are this year. Look on domestic policy, there are all sorts of things that are going catastrophically wrong in the US with the new Biden administration. We've got a border crisis that is horrifically bad, we've had a gas crisis and gas lines, we have a burgeoning inflation crisis. But I think as bad as the economic and domestic policy has been, the foreign policy has been consistently wrong. At every region of the globe, the Biden administration has managed to undermine our friends and allies and to show weakness and in facts and millions or even billions of dollars to the enemies of America who want to kill us.

And if you look at Israel, it's worth recognizing. Just pause and think, nine months ago we saw peace flowering in the Middle East. We saw the Abraham accords, historic peace agreements, that completely flabbergasted official Washington. And anyone who's really interested in peace, Middle East peace or otherwise, should pause and reflect and say, Okay, What happened to change that? And for a long time, there had been a bipartisan consensus in Washington that with Middle East Policy, the answer was a deliberate strategic ambiguity. That America blurs the lines, it's not clear if we're with Israelis, the Palestinians, a little of both. We'll criticize one, we'll criticize the other, and somehow that will produce peace. And that American policy has been a stunning failure for decades. It doesn't work. And why doesn't it work, because it encourages Hamas terrorists and Hezbollah terrorists to engage in even more vigorous attacks because they know America will undermine Israel as a result.

If you look at the last four years, the last four years represented a very different shift. And it's one that I've

been arguing for nine years, which is that America should stand unequivocally with Israel, with zero ambiguity. And to understand Abraham accords, I think you have to back up to two antecedent decisions that reflected the two most important foreign policy decisions of the Trump administration. The first was moving our embassy in Israel to Jerusalem, the second was pulling out of the Iran nuclear deal. Those two decisions, I believe were interrelated. On the embassy, we'd seen presidents in both parties, Democrats and Republicans, promised to move the embassy. And presidents of both parties have broken that promise. In the Trump administration, and you guys know this well, because you bore the scars of him. But there was a vigorous argument within the Trump administration about whether to move the embassy.

Both state and defense opposed moving the embassy. Both Rex Tillerson and Jim Madison, do not move the embassy. And their argument was, the enemies of Israel will be mad at us. My reaction was, What like they're overwhelmingly happy with us today? Did I miss something? And listen, this argument had real force in the White House because particularly the first year in the Trump administration, there were aspirations of Middle East peace. And the argument was made, Well, if you move the embassy, it makes peace harder to achieve. And I engaged vigorously in this argument and said, Look, your premise is exactly backwards, that I actually think moving the embassy moves us more rapidly towards peace. Because moving the embassy and I said, And our Arab allies in the region. Look, if we do that they will publicly denounce it. They'll feel like they have an obligation because of domestic politics to publicly denounce it. But I think privately they'll celebrate.

I think privately, they will say, in Egypt, in Jordan, in Saudi Arabia and UAE, I think privately, they'll say, you know what, if we have a president with the guts to stand up to the New York Times and the condemnation of the world media, and say we stand unequivocally with Israel, then maybe just maybe we'll have a president strong enough to stand up and say, Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. And I think for the Arabs in the Middle East, they're looking at the idea of a nuclear Iran as a terrifying prospect. I made the case repeatedly to the president, move our embassy, make a clear statement that both our friends and our enemies will understand. President Trump agreed with me. Overruled his own Secretary of State, his own Secretary defense, moved the embassy. I was there in Jerusalem the day we opened the embassy, so were you. It was an incredible time, it was the 70th anniversary of the date of the creation of the modern state of Israel. And I do not believe it is coincidental, that within a week of opening the embassy, the administration announced we're pulling out of the disastrous Obama Iran nuclear deal.

That was I think the single most important National Security decision of the Trump administration. Same fight played out, both state and defense argued, Don't pull out of the deal. Again, I made the case repeatedly to the president that the deal was disastrous. That sending \$100 billion to a theocratic lunatic who chants Death to America and death to Israel is an exceptionally bad idea. And the end of the day, President Trump made the right decision. Again overruled his own state department, his own defense department. Now why did those two decisions set the stage for the Abraham Accord? Because everyone in the region understood, Okay, now I know where everyone is. The signing of the Abraham accord that week, I was talking with the foreign ministers and ambassadors of UAE and Bahrain. Both said it was almost word for word, the same thing, and it really stood out.

They both said, We want to be friends with America. It is now clear to us that America stands unequivocally with Israel. So therefore, we'll be friends with Israel. And we saw the first peace agreements between Israel and Arab countries in decades, that came from that clarity.

Now, where are we today? Biden administration in five months has screwed all of that up. They're undermining Israel, they're sending hundreds of millions of dollars to the Palestinian Authority that's in bed with Hamas. And the result predictably as can be with 4000 rockets raining down in Israel. Because look, I think that rocket attack, frankly, was directed by Iran, and was a test of the Biden administration. And the Biden administration failed that test, and failed that test badly. Because I think the result they were interested in seeing is how will they react, and Biden immediately began undermining Israel and saying we want a ceasefire. And I think what that was a practice run at, I am deeply concerned that in the next four years before the end of 2024, that the Ayatollah will do everything humanly possible to acquire a nuclear weapon. Because of the Ayatollah's judgment, Joe Biden won't do a damn thing about it. And so I think that is incredibly dangerous.

**Victoria Coates:** Indeed. Quickly want to pick up on one thing you just said. That the Hamas attack was directed by Iran, which I think is certainly the case. Hamas doesn't tend to make things themselves, they've got to get the rockets from somewhere. The training, the funding. But one thing that was quite interesting about the period in the lead up is, there was an announcement, I don't know if it's real or not, but the intent was declared by the Iranian regime to up their payments to Hamas exponentially, from something like 90 million a year to over 200 million year. What are they going to get that money? And if they're not getting it from sanctions relief immediately, would you agree that this is actually being funded really by the Communist Chinese, because the sanctions are not being imposed on them? So they're buying gas from Iran at an accelerating rate. So basically, you have Chinese funded state terrorism.

**Ted Cruz:** Look, I think that's clearly right, and you've had the Chinese buying their oil. One of the things in the Trump administration after we pulled out of the Iran deal, there were multiple battles afterwards about how to strengthen that. Because at the time we pulled out of the Iran deal, there were waivers in place, there was an oil waiver in place, there was multiple civilian nuclear waivers in place. And we had the same battle lines engaged. So on the oil waiver, for example, as you know, the State Department opposed ending the oil waiver. And state argued, if we end the oil waiver, the price of oil will skyrocket globally, the price of gasoline will skyrocket. Now the Department of Energy, which Fred you would think might know something about energy, said no, that's ridiculous. There's plenty of global supply, and we can cut off Iranian oil and not impact the price of oil. I leaned in again vigorously with the President. I spent a lot of the last four years, as Victoria knows, I would go to the White House and wander off his office. And it was very productive.

You could tell my staff at the senate terrified, because I'd be without staff and often without my phone, so they weren't sure what mischief was being brewed. But when the President agreed and ended the oil waivers, it cut off. Iran was selling about a million barrels of oil a day, we cut that off, cratered the Iranian economy. Price of oil, the price of gas didn't move at all. So energy was right, state was wrong. If you look at one of the elements of the Iran deal, and where we are now with international sanctions expiring, is that you now have both China and

Russia stepping in with multi billion dollar arms deals with Iran, where they're looking to make a bunch of money and run funds into Iran, which will go directly to terrorist trying to kill us or trying to kill our friends and allies.

**Fred Fleitz:** Senator, the Iranians are now asking for a guarantee before they agree to a deal to get back into the JCPOA. That the US will never withdraw again, and will not reimpose sanctions. And I'm wondering, do you think the Iranians may save us from the Biden administration? Because there's no way that the Biden administration can guarantee that, because I imagine the next republican president I hope takes off as of January 2025, will back out of the JCPOA on his first day in office.

**Ted Cruz:** Well, since I have some views on who I hope that person is, in at least one outcome, I can quite confidently say that would [crosstalk 00:20:25]. This is reminiscent of an argument I had at the beginning of the Trump administration with Jim Mattis. So Mattis came in as Secretary of Defense. And he said repeatedly, publicly and privately, he said, the reason he supported the Iran deal is he said, America gave its word. And America keeps our word. And I'm sitting in my office and saying, General with all due respect, that's bullshit. America did not give our word because in this country, America gives our word two ways and two ways only. Either through laws passed by both houses of Congress and signed by the president, or through treaties signed by the president and ratified by two thirds of the Senate. This was neither. And this was flagrantly and deliberately neither. This was Barack Obama in defiance of the Congress of the United States, making a unilateral promise. I agree, Barack Obama gave his word, and he's not around anymore.

And the same is true, Joe Biden can enter whatever terrible deal he wants. But his intention is not to submit it to the Senate for ratification, because he can't get support. Which means it's going to be short lived, it's why I'm so concerned that the Ayatollah is going to try to get a nuke before the end of 24. I can tell you when I was in Israel a couple of weeks ago, the dominant conversation I had with Netanyahu, with the Foreign Minister, with a defense minister, with the energy minister, with the president of Knesset. The conversation I had with all of them, the most important conversation was, if Iran is on the verge of acquiring nuclear weapons and the American administration is unwilling to act, can Israel act and will Israel act to prevent Iran from getting nuclear weapons? And the answers I got were encouraging on their face, I hope that's true.

Because the follow up I asked is, And how willing is the Government of Israel going to be to press back against the enormous political pressure that the Biden administration is going to put on them to not oppose a new Iran deal, which I think is incredibly dangerous. And that I have less confidence on the second question.

**Victoria Coates:** I want to take a small swerve to talk about a domestic issue, which I think has great relevance here. As Fred mentioned, we have a special project here at the Center on anti Semitism and BDS, which is headed up by Dr. David Wormser, who hopefully is watching us on the screen. Today, wish you were here, Dave, because one of the offshoots that I've been tracking from the violence in Israel is a spike in violence against Jews here in the United States. How much of that do you think is normalized by the attitudes of your fellow congressman squad or women rather? And then also by Biden administration nominees like Kristin Clark, who you were very vocal about during her nomination to the top civil rights post at DOJ?

**Ted Cruz:** I think it is very dangerous. I think today's Democratic Party has been radicalized. Joe Biden has made a decision to hand the policy agenda over to the extreme left, and I think the people driving the agenda in this administration, are Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, and AOC. And I think they've made that determination because they've decided that's where the energy, that's where the passion in the Democratic Party is. And for all of us in the pro Israel community, a strength of this community has been historically a bipartisan commitment to defending the friendship and alliance between Israel and the United States. I think that bipartisan commitment has been profoundly frayed and weakened. And you can spot the exact moment in which it was weakened. And that was when Barack Obama was president, and they were negotiating as their top foreign policy objective in the second term of the administration, the Iran deal. And Bibi Netanyahu was rightly saying that a nuclear Iran was an existential threat to Israel.

And I've joked, by existential he didn't mean a Frenchman in a black beret, chain smoking. He meant literally going to the very existence of Israel. And Senate Democrats were faced with a choice which the White House made in unequivocal terms, choose Israel or choose the Democratic Party. And if you remember a moment that was profound as one democratic senator dared speak out against the deal, Bob Menendez. The day Menendez came out against the deal, is the day the Obama Justice Department leaked that they were indicting him. And that was not subtle, and it was not lost on a single member of the United States Senate. And it was a message to every democrat, if you dare oppose us, we're putting on brass knuckles and we will crush you. And every democrat folded under. And what became more dangerous, look I do a lot of work with APAC, I respect APAC. APAC lobbied very hard against it, and the Democratic Party told them, go jump in the lake. And then not a single democrat paid even one iota of a price for it.

They were reelected with Apex financial support, and the message the democrats got is, we can do whatever we want. Partisan politics can Trump. The NRA were saying, Don't support a bill to confiscate all firearms in America. And a bunch of politicians voted to confiscate all firearms in America, and then the NRA turned around to raise money for those politicians. It goes to the very heart of the existence of a movement when you say this is an existential issue and Oh, nevermind, we don't care what you've done on it. Where are we now? Well, we're now in a much worse place. You look at the squad who is regularly, consistently, [violently 00:26:52] anti Israel, violently anti Semitic. And as Hamas was raining rockets down on Israel, you had Ilan Omar accusing American Israel as behaving like Hamas and the Taliban, calling elected democracies that respect human rights, terrorists. And I think basically the squad operated as press secretaries for Hamas. I mean, it was disgraceful.

I will give a moment silver lining or hope, which is prior iteration. When the squad first arrived and you had multiple anti Semitic comments from members of the squad, you may remember the Nancy Pelosi house tried to pass a resolution condemning anti Semitism. And Speaker Pelosi drafted it, put it out there and suddenly the Democratic Conference fell apart. They were not willing to condemn anti Semitism. AOC spoke loudly against it, blasted the resolution. And so they ended up watering it down to a resolution condemning hatred of any kind. Just if you dislike people, disliking people is bad. But it was the most bland, watered down nothing burger. Now when that happened, I was very dismayed and I hoped at the time the Senate could do better. And so I went to Tim Kaine, Democrat obviously Hillary Clinton's running mate. And I said Tim, can we team up and write a clear resolution condemning anti Semitism? We did that. Unequivocally condemned anti Semitism, condemned

BDS, the BDS movement is anti Semitic. Condemned the comments made by the squad, didn't identify them by name, but it condemned the substantive comments as anti Semitic.

And the two of us together, went to the Senate floor to pass it and ended up passing unanimously. 100 to nothing. When we went to the floor, we didn't know if someone would stand and object, and it was kind of interesting that nobody did. That was a moment of light in what otherwise is a really troubling environment, because I think the angry anti Israel left is getting angrier and having more power, and that's really dangerous.

**Victoria Coates:** One little footnote to that though. My colleague here at the center, Maya Carmen has recently written a piece about the carbonization of the Democratic Party. And the good news is that hasn't really turned out very well in the UK. So, my hope is that what you are seeing with that kind of vote, may be the vote on Jerusalem from February 97 to three, indicates that this is not going to be a positive force in the Democratic Party. And along those lines, I wanted to give you an opportunity to talk a little bit about what happened in the Foreign Relations Committee today. How well you're getting along with your colleagues?

**Ted Cruz:** We had some fireworks today, which happens with some regularity. Fireworks and [inaudible 00:29:58] a couple of things. One, we Had a bill on the communist government of China. And a bill setting a presumption that goods coming from Xinjiang are the product of slave labor and forced labor, and shouldn't be allowed in. The problem with that, is that the Biden executive order of electric vehicles sets out a priority that makes it preeminent among other priorities within the administration, and the bill we were voting on has pretty wide waiver authority to allow the executive to waive it. So I introduced an amendment that said we should not import electric vehicle or their components from Xinjiang. That the presumption should be, it's slave labor, it should be in a rebuttable presumption and lets important them from other places. And we had a very vigorous argument. It was interesting, those who oppose the amendment, they made twin arguments. They number one said, Well, it's redundant. The bill already does that. And it's like, Well if it's redundant, why don't you take the amendment?

If you claim this is already in there, then this would be very easy to take it. But the real answer, I said, is listen. The Biden administration treats climate change like a religion, and to the outcome up with this if this bill passes, is like night follows day, we're going to see the Biden administration issue a waiver. And we're going to see hundreds of millions of dollars of electric vehicles and their components, not to mention the rare earth materials that are mined using slave labor and forced labor with the blessing and complicity the American government. And unfortunately my memo was voted down, but Chairman Bob Menendez was quite unhappy with me on that. And then we moved to an Israel provision, and in the Israel provision [observant 00:31:55] resolution with some good language, some good language on the Abraham accords, which actually I was a co sponsor of. I negotiated, there were multiple elements of my support that we negotiated and got language that we thought was good.

And at the last minute this week, they substituted in all the bad stuff that we'd taken out. And so I had two amendments, one to remove. There was a statement in the bill that says, it is the policy of the United States to support a two state solution. I have for a long time thought that it is incredibly arrogant of the United States to dictate the terms of peace. I think a two state solution could very what be what occurs, but I think Israel is a

sovereign nation. Israel is entitled to make determinations about its own security, and I think nobody wants peace more than the Israelis. It is Israeli babies that are being murdered. I think the impediment to peace is not Israel, the impediment to peace is a Palestinian authority that is in bed with Hamas, that refuses to renounce terrorism, and it still denies Israel's right to exist. As long as you are dealing with people who want to kill you. There was an old political cartoon during the Obama administration that had the Ayatollah Khomeini and John Kerry, and the Ayatollah said, Death to America. And John Kerry said, Can we meet you halfway?

There's not a middle ground on that one. So my view on two states solution is, if Israel decides that's in Israel's interest, great. They have the prerogative to do so. But who are we to arrogantly come clumping in and saying, we're gonna demand that? So I had an amendment to strip that out. Senate Democrats got very upset about that, and at one point, Menendez said that I was blackening the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which actually laughed out loud at.

**Victoria Coates:** It's a badge of honor, not the first [crosstalk 00:33:55]

**Ted Cruz:** I was like, okay great. And he said, this is all political. And I was like, Really? What's political about it? And he said, You're running for president. Okay, thank you. Okay, whatever. I don't believe we should presume to impose our policy in Israel. So that amendment failed, there was a second amendment I had that was to explicitly limit American funds going to the Palestinian Authority to comply with the Taylor force act. If you look at what the Biden administration has done, they're bending over backwards to get around Taylor force to try to put money in all sorts of pockets and say, This is not technically going to fund terrorists or the families of terrorists, but money is fungible. So I had a provision saying, Look, we should not be sending money, as long as they are funding terrorists. Paying people to murder Americans and murders Israelis, we shouldn't send them US taxpayer money.

The Democrats were very dismayed at that, and it failed on a party line vote. Every republican voted yes, every democrat voted no. And Menendez got very upset and said, I'm sick of these partisan tricks to make us vote against something like the Taylor force act. I'm like, Maybe you could actually just support the Taylor force act and stop sending money to people funding terrorists. But that's the dynamic we're in, partisan politics trumps everything else with today's Democratic Party.

**Fred Fleitz:** Sir, it's about 3:20, we're gonna let you out at 3:30. I thought I'd give our audience an opportunity to ask some questions. I'm going to take one from this room and then we'll try to do one online. I had to repeat whatever you ask because the audience won't hear you. So [Dalia 00:35:42], we'll start with you.

**Dalia:** Thank you. Senator, how many Ilhan Omar and Rasheeda Tlaibs does it take for the US to seriously look into the activities of the Council of American Islamic Relations, aka the Muslim Brotherhood, in the United States?

**Fred Fleitz:** So how many Ilhan Omar and Rasheeda Tlaibs will it take before the US government will look into the Council on Islamic American relations.

**Ted Cruz:** I think it's a great question. I think we should right now when it comes to the Muslim Brotherhood. The Muslim Brotherhood is a terrorist organization, and I have fought in multiple congresses, introduced legislation to designate the Muslim Brotherhood as a terrorist organization. I spent four years urging the Trump administration to do so, I didn't succeed on that one. I've succeeded on a lot of other ones, but didn't. We came close, we came very close on that one, but ultimately didn't get it to happen. I can tell you, during the Obama administration, there was a hearing I chaired on willful blindness. And it involved a whistleblower from the Department of Homeland Security that had gone through DHS records, and had deleted or otherwise modified them to remove any references to jihad, or Muslim Brotherhood. And this exercise was prompted by an email from the White House, in which they directed them to purge the records. Purge was the word used to eliminate acknowledgement of the source of the terrorism.

And that same dynamic is playing out today. Let's take a different issue, gun control. We've seen the Kabuki theater that plays out in Washington whenever there is a mass shooting, every Democrat goes in high dudgeon how we need to take away guns from law abiding citizens all across the country, and it becomes the dominant issue. Well, if you notice there were two things that happened this year, that it was the dominant issue for a moment and then it disappeared. In Colorado, there was a shooting, and the shooting been a guy named Jim Bob with a Magga hat, it probably would still be leading the news today. But instead it was from [inaudible 00:38:08] Syria, I think it was.

**Victoria Coates:** A refugee.

Ted Cruz: A refugee from Syria with some fairly vocal political views, and it's suddenly disappeared. Nothing to see here, this didn't happen. And then if you remember the attack on the Capitol, where an individual attacked a police officer. But again, it was a radical Islamist and it's suddenly disappeared from the news. Of course we should acknowledge the dangers of Jihadist ideology that seeks to wage war on America. And when you have members of Congress that celebrate and promote that ideology, I think it's even more dangerous.

**Fred Fleitz:** So if we can take an online question.

**Speaker 5:** So if Republicans take back Congress in 2022, will there be any substantive changes to Israel policy?

**Fred Fleitz:** If Republicans take back Congress in 2022, will there be substantive changes to Israel policy?

**Ted Cruz:** Yes and no. Bad legislation hopefully will be stopped, and that's something. When it comes to foreign policy and national security policy, the executive has enormous authority. As I look at 2022 and 2024, I'm very optimistic. I think the Biden administration, Biden, Schumer and Pelosi are wildly overshooting. And I think there's a natural pendulum effect to politics. So I think when one party gets in power and goes too far, the American people pull them back. And I think 2022 is going to be a really good election, I'd put the chances of Republicans retaking the house in about 80 20. I'd put the chances our retaking the Senate at about 50 50. I think the year is going to be very favorable. The Senate map isn't great, we have more vulnerable Republican seats than vulnerable democratic seats. So if it were a better map, I'd be more bullish on the Senate. Even so, I think it's

about 50 50. I think what the Biden administration wants to do, is ram through as much bad policy in the next 18 months.

I think they recognize there's a very significant chance they lose the house. If and when they lose the house, I think they will largely write off legislation, and then proceed to pursue bad policy through regulatory policy executive action. And when it comes to national security in Israel, things like sending funds to the Palestinians, Palestinian Authority I think they'll continue to do that and Enron. I am hopeful that we will see support for replenishing Israel's Iron Dome munitions. In addition to that, and one of the things I spent a lot of the time talking with Israelis about, is the improvements they need in Iron Dome in terms of their capacity, in terms of their radar equipment. I think we should be funding that as well, I've already introduced legislation to do that. I'm worried about that. I mean, you saw AOC and Bernie Sanders introducing legislation to block arms sales to Israel, they don't want precision guided munitions because they want dumb bombs.

I mean Israel bends over backwards to minimize civilian casualties, and the anti Israel left wants to essentially defund them. I think that is really dangerous, I think we'll see things. Alright one initiative we're already seeing from the Biden administration, is moving forward to open a consulate in Jerusalem directed to Palestinians. I think they've made a strategic decision, as much as they would like to, and I believe they would like to. I think they've decided they can't back away and close our Embassy in Jerusalem. So they've decided instead of going that direction, they'll just strengthen the Palestinian claim to sovereignty over Jerusalem. And its intention is the same thing, to undermine Israel's claim. By the way, I do have to give a brief shout out. I think actually studies of effective leadership in government that someone ought to write a careful study of effective leadership of government, focusing on David Friedman. So David is, as most of you all know, was the US ambassador to Israel. David has become a good friend.

If you look at number one, in many respects David led the US Israel policy for four years for the Trump administration, which is weird. I don't know of another situation in which an ambassador is driving the substantive policy to a country, particularly a region and a country as important as Israel. And so David, when we were fighting over the embassy, David was a very active ally. Not withstanding Rex Tillerson's opposition. But once Trump made the announcement. So the state department wanted to study how to open it, wanted to do a feasibility study, a security study. It was obvious what Foggy Bottom wanted to do, which is studied to death for three years, hope and pray a Democrat gets elected president and then the idea is scrapped. And the piece that David Friedman did with that was extraordinary, is he found property we already had in Jerusalem, an existing property that he converted into an embassy in a matter of months. And opened the damn embassy.

And it flabbergasted the state department bureaucracy, nothing can move that quickly. And it ended up being a checkmate move on that front, because it was open, then closing it became impossible. But going back to what Biden will do unilaterally. I think they'll do a lot towards an Iran deal, a lot towards undermining Israel, a lot towards enhancing the Palestinians claim to sovereignty in Jerusalem. They'll do all of that unilaterally. Even if Republicans take both houses, we'll still have the Filibuster rule, which means Senate Democrats will be able to block legislation. So at best, we will prevent bad legislation, hopefully. But a great deal of mischief will be done by the president in the administration unilaterally.

**Fred Fleitz:** Senator Cruz, I'm so grateful you came here today for this incredibly thorough discussion about security topics, and let's just give him a hand. You could clearly go on for another hour, and I hope that we can do this again. The Center for Security Policy produces really good analysis, very [title 00:44:50] analysis on a wide range of topics. Go to our websites [securefreedom.org](http://securefreedom.org), we rely on your support to put up programs like this there is. There is a donate box in the upper right hand corner. Next week, we're going to have an incredible program with Robert Spencer, and he's going to talk about his new book, Islamophobia and the threat to free speech. We will get a copy of this book to you as soon as off the press center. Thank you everyone here for joining. Thank you everyone online, I hope to see you soon.



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