Discussion

- Sen. Marsha Blackburn, United States Senator, Iowa
- Rep. Beth Van Duyne, United Stated Representative, Twenty-Fourth District of Texas
- Rep. Julia Letlow, United Stated Representative, Fifth District of Louisiana
- Rebeccah L. Heinrichs, Senior Fellow and Director, Keystone Defense Initiative
- Morgan Ortagus, Founder, Polaris National Security and Former State Department Spokesperson

Disclaimer: This transcript is based off of a recorded video conference and breaks in the stream may have resulted in mistranscriptions in the text.

A video of the event is available: https://www.hudson.org/events/clarity-hamas-terror-campaign-sexual-violence-israel-marsha-blackburn-joni-ernst-deb-fischer

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Hudson seeks to guide public policy makers and global leaders in government and business through a vigorous program of publications, conferences, policy briefings, and recommendations.
Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Good morning. Welcome to Hudson Institute. My name is Rebeccah Heinrichs and I’m a senior fellow here at Hudson.

This is a unique event for Hudson. It’s unique in that there are so many influential elected officials here with us, and it’s unique in that the purpose of the event is not so much to gain consensus on a complex policy issue as it is to declare a reality. It is a historical moment for the historical records for this country. So what is that reality? Just as there were Holocaust deniers, there are Hamas sexual violence deniers, and we will not let it stand. The women’s rights groups might be quiet, but we will not. The denial effectively provides cover for the horror.

Hamas is utilizing sexual violence against women and girls because they are Jews. And Hamas is using this as a feature of its grotesque campaign of terror. The rape and other forms of sexual violence against girls and women, sisters, mothers and friends, is to maximize the torture and the pain and the humiliation of the women and their families and the Jewish people. Rape is not resistance. Brutalizing through sexual violation and an exploitation dehumanizes the aggressors, not the victims. Those women who endure the acts, they’re full of dignity and of infinite value. We honor them now and refuse to remember them as the terrorists want us to, the terrorists bring shame on themselves and we are appalled by them.

And last, we must know, we must understand the nature of Hamas and all Islamist terrorists. When they committed these horrific acts of sexual violence against these beautiful, smart, creative, and soulful women, they communicated to Israel and the world that they are outside the norms of civilized behavior. There is no compromise with them. There is no negotiation. They must be destroyed. The best thing our country can do, the United States, is to provide diplomatic support, moral defense, and the practical needs of the nation’s warfighting mission.

I am honored to participate in this event. My dear friend Morgan Ortagus said, we must do something. This idea is hers. She said, we must do something as courageous as some of the women American women did at the UN in condemning the sexual violence of Hamas. And Hudson was more than happy to turn her vision into reality. So Morgan, thank you so much. You are a force. It’s a privilege to have you with us today.

Morgan Ortagus:

Thank you.

It’s been two months and I keep wondering when we’re going to be able to talk about this, maybe it’s going to take years. And I thought we were talking backstage and I thought, I’m good. I can talk about this now. I talk about this every day on TV and radio. But as a Jewish mother, all of us as mothers with the daughter, thinking about what these women went through in Israel on October 7th, and the fact that it took UN women and most international women’s organizations over two months to recognize that Hamas was using rape as a weapon of war. Why did it take two months? It took two months because we’re Jews. That’s the only reason.

So I want to thank Rebeccah. I want to thank Hudson. I was on a plane to the Middle East at the end of last week. I texted Rebeccah and a few friends and Senator Ernst, who was always ready for all of my good ideas, fairies that I have and these amazing congresswomen on stage and Senator Blackburn will be joining us as well on the live stream. I texted all of these friends,
and actually I'll say, I'll give them credit as Senator Gillibrand, Hillary Clinton and Sheryl Sandberg stood at the Israeli mission at the UN last week, as Rebeccah mentioned, and called this out. And I was inspired by what they did. The Hamas using rape as a tool in their fight and their terrorist acts. There's no partisanship around that. And so I appreciate the Democratic women who have spoken out. And today is a day for Republican women to speak out.

Because people don't believe Jewish women, we'll give you some of the facts. Israeli police have gathered more than 1500 testimony from witnesses and medics, as well as forensic evidence demonstrating that rape and sexual assault were widespread. A young man at the music festival saw a woman being gang-raped by 8 to 10 men before they shot and killed her. There's so many other examples that I'm sure our guest speakers want to get into. But there's one thing that I must do and that's also highlight we all know as Senator Ernst has said many times, that Hamas is funded by Iran. This attack did not happen without the Islamic Republic of Iran, at least 90, 93% of Hamas's funding comes from Iran. And why is that important?

Remember that the Iranian regime also uses rape as a weapon of war. This was prevalent in the 2022 women's protest movement. We all remember Woman, Life, Freedom. And the Iranian regime used it to degrade and force Iranian men and women into submission. The regime's secret prisons frequently used sexual violence in order to break their victims. Iranian prosecutors were entirely complicit and often ignored allegations of rape. Hamas is, of course, as we said, trained and funded by Iran. This connection is unsurprising. And to the Iranian women who chant Woman, Life, Freedom and who have been so supportive of Israeli women since October 7th, we also want to recognize that they are victims as well.

So as I said earlier, before I hand it over to our senators and our congresswoman, I just want to thank everybody for being here. As you see, so many people around the world are calling for a ceasefire. They're telling Israel that they cannot finish Hamas as a terrorist organization. And the United States is not going to stand by that. So every time somebody calls for a ceasefire, I want all of us to remember today, to remember what happened at the Hudson Institute, to remember the victims, to remember the stories that we're about to hear. Every time they call for a ceasefire let's remember who Hamas really is and why they must be destroyed. Thank you so much.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

What we're going to do now is we're going to hear from Senator Ernst. We're going to go down the line. Oh, great. We've got Senator Blackburn with us. We have Congresswoman Van Duyne. We have Congresswoman Letlow. And we're also going to talk about, I mean, one of the issues that has reverberated because of the denial is what we witnessed with the university presidents in the Congressional hearing, not being able to condemn speech as harassment against Jewish college students. And so we will be discussing that as well today. And with that, should we turn it over to Senator Blackburn. We are going to kick it off with you, Senator, the floor is yours.

Sen. Marsha Blackburn:

Thank you so much. And Morgan, thank you for your leadership on this issue. I am so delighted to step out of Judiciary committee and join my colleagues. As you have said, everyone is aware that October 7th is a day that we are not going to forget, the unprovoked attack that was carried out against Israeli citizens. And what is just so concerning to us is that Hamas has said that that
was the first round, and they’re coming back again and again and again until they eliminate Israel. And we hear these chants, from the river to the sea. We know what Hamas goal is. And we know that Hamas is using sexual violence as a weapon of war. So, it is imperative that we stand together, that we call this out, and that Hamas be held accountable for what has transpired. Yesterday we started a push in the US Senate to get answers and to bring accountability to this issue.

And Morgan, you mentioned dealing with Iran. It is so important that we cut the funding streams that Iran has, that we make certain that sanctions are enforced against them for their oil sales. That we make certain that the $6 billion is frozen. I've led that push in the Senate. We have passed my legislation in the Senate. We are working to freeze not only that $6 billion ransom payment, but the $10 billion in oil revenues. So that Iran does not have the money to fund Hamas and Hezbollah and the Houthis and ISIS in Syria and in Iraq. And I am so pleased to join in support of getting answers for Israel, for the Israeli women, many who were raped, their legs were broken, their pelvises were broken, their bodies were bloodied. They were paraded naked or half naked through the streets, mocked, ridiculed, used as a weapon in this war.

So thank you for the attention that is brought to this. Thank you for the respect that you have given and shown to Jewish women. I am grateful to be a part of your activity today.

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Thank you so much, Senator Blackburn. Senator Ernst.

Sen. Joni Ernst:

Yes, thank you. And I want to thank my colleagues as well for joining in a letter that we are pushing to the United Nations. This is incredibly personal to so many women, as we see what these Israeli women are going through at the hands of Hamas. We are pushing a letter to the UN Secretary General demanding answers on why it took the United Nations, who operates under the facade of being this human rights organization, why it took them 57 days to come out and decry the abuse of these women.

And Morgan and I were just having a conversation this morning and she asked, why is it taking so long? Why did it take nearly two months for them to come out and state that this was abhorrent actions perpetrated on these women? And I answered simply because they are Jews. Because they are Jews. They would never want this to happen to any other population of women. And yet when we see it perpetrated against Jewish women living in Israel, for some reason they seem to think it wasn't a big deal. So we are demanding answers from the United Nations. They must come forward. And we are thankful, Morgan, you called out Hillary Clinton. Sheryl Sandberg, and my colleague, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, and I'm grateful that they stepped forward and stated how horrible these actions were. It really is a bipartisan issue. So we’re here to push that issue today. It is never acceptable to use rape or sexual violence as a weapon of war. Never okay. I am a survivor of sexual assault. I have made-

Sen. Joni Ernst:

Okay. I am a survivor of sexual assault. I have made that known in the past. And sexual assault is a tool that people will use as a means to degrade and humiliate others. They see it not as sexual excitement, but as power. And that's exactly what Hamas is using this as is power. They
are showing that they have power over these helpless women and men that have been sexually assaulted by Hamas in Gaza. Now, we've seen many of these women that were taken out of their homes. They were assaulted on site, of course, in Israel. But what we have heard is that those that were taken into captivity in Gaza, they are exponentially being abused, much more so than what was witnessed at the music festival and in the kibbutz. This is just 10 times, a hundred times worse what they're experiencing.

And not only are they being sexually assaulted, they're also being mutilated so that the actions will live on forever in their memories if God is so gracious as to allow them to live and be returned home to their families. So this is an ongoing issue that we are standing up for these women, these Jewish women, and we are going to continue to speak loudly. I'm going to share the quote that Sheryl Sandberg shared at the United Nations, and this was last week. She said, "Silence is complicity and in the face of terror we cannot be quiet." And thank you, Ms. Sandberg, for your support. We cannot be complicit. We must speak out, and we will be loud and we will be clear. And the United Nations needs to follow the example of these women here today. So thank you Morgan. Thank you Rebecca, very much. And to my colleagues, thank you so much for joining us.

**Rep. Julia Letlow:**

Thank you so much. Thank you to Morgan and Rebecca for inviting me here and to our colleagues and senators, thank you for making your voices be heard. And my background is in higher education, and I serve on the Education and Workforce Committee and I just went through one of the most horrific committee hearings that I've ever witnessed, and that was the questioning of three university presidents. You probably all saw it, maybe some of you watched the committee hearing, but I sat there in disbelief as these three presidents time and time again when questioned if the call for genocide went against their policies and procedures on their campuses, they answered that it depends upon the context. As I heard that and was just in disbelief I had a round of questioning that I was going to give them, but I decided against it midway through because I realized they were not going to give straightforward answers.

They had been coached, they were going to evade the questions. And so instead, I decided to share a firsthand witness accounts with them. And as a mom, as a daughter, as a woman, I never imagined in a million years I would be sharing those words in a public committee hearing in the United States Congress. But they needed to hear it. And the horror on their faces was real. But I couldn't help but point out the hypocrisy that they were displaying by not condemning what their students on their campuses were saying and how that had to make women feel on their campuses, and in particular Jewish women. I can only imagine how terrifying it is to be a Jewish woman student walking across any one of their campuses. And my president and my administration will not stand up to antisemitism and hold students accountable who are practicing antisemitism on their campuses.

What message is that saying to women across this country on college campuses? We have done so much to promote and to make sure that women feel safe and to go against violence against women on our campuses. That day was a major setback in all that we have done on college campuses, and I've been so proud to be a part of that. But on that day in Congress, I quite frankly was embarrassed to be from higher education. And I told those presidents that. And I also told them, the buck stops with you as the president. You stand up, you say that this is wrong. You expel students, you hold professors accountable when they go against your policies and procedures. And if your policies and procedures do not condemn antisemitism, then you should be held accountable and you should not just resign, you should be fired.
Rep. Beth Van Duyne:

It's a difficult subject to talk about? We talked a little bit about our histories. I had gone to Cornell University and while I was there I was the chairman of the Cornell Advocates for Rape Education. I worked for the rape crisis center. I actually did my honors' dissertation on theories of date rape. It's a study. I have really studied this issue and I've seen it. Last week we had a hearing at Ways and Means and we had students, Jewish students who had been harassed on campus because there were Jewish. It was a woman, it was a college student from Cornell. And I was absolutely appalled that that was happening on a campus that... I'm not going to say how many decades ago it was, but that really seemed to take it seriously. I helped write our sexual harassment policy for that university.

And now not only are they allowing these types of protests to occur, it's their university professors that are leading them. There was a history professor Russell Rickford at Cornell who said how exhilarating October 7th was, was promoting Hamas' atrocities. Not talking about the women, not talking about the men, not talking about the babies that were butchered, their heads cut off. The women who were in the streets, blood pouring out of where they had been violated, beaten, mutilated, and shot as a last act of terrorist activity. Didn't talk about the women who right now are being held captive, being mutilated, being raped continuously. Brett Kavanaugh, God love him. When he came on the scene and was looking to join the Supreme Court, you had all of these women's organizations who came out, did not mind besmirching his history, him as a person, his family, women who had worked with him.

Where are their voices today? Where's the anger? Where's the outrage? Was it all feigned because it was political? Why can these people not say Hamas has committed atrocities of war using rape, using rape of women and men and children? Why can they not condemn that? The whole hashtag me too movement, believe all women, except if they're Israeli women, except if they are conservative women, except if they're women who don't continuously have the same narrative of some of the uber leftist politicians and organizations that we see. It took months for some of these groups, and I appreciate the fact that you have women like Cheryl Cyber who come out and actually speak. But some of the women that we serve with, when they finally were guilted into making comments were so tepid.

And did anyone actually believe them or did they just feel like it was a politically expedient thing to do? I'll just go ahead and make a statement. These are atrocities. This is the worst atrocity committed against the Jewish people that we have seen since the Holocaust. This is their 911. And for some people in the world to be going around and saying, no, we need to have a ceasefire. Are you kidding me? You've got over 200 people who are being held captive now. God knows what's happening to them, and you want to have a ceasefire. How about you fight to get those lives back to their families before you start talking about let's not fight for it. Let's not fight for their lives.

I have no problem saying that we support the Israeli people, we support what IDF is doing, and that we absolutely need to wipe Hamas off the face of the earth, not just for Israel's sake, but for the Palestinians as well, who are being held and brutalized by that regime. So I'm proud to be able to lend my voice here and talk about the atrocities, calling it out for what it is, identifying the people who are doing it and saying that we support not only their annihilation, but we support the people who are fighting against them. And I appreciate having other strong female voices on this panel and men who are speaking out on this as well. You can't do it enough. So thank you very much for inviting me today and thank you for your interest in this topic.
Morgan Ortagus:

You know, it is... First of all, I wish you all could clone yourselves and we could have 50 more of you in the Senate and the House. I feel good about being a Republican and having these women representing us, and we're going to keep pushing this out there. We're not going to let the world forget. When we look at what happened, we mentioned earlier it took about eight weeks for the UN women to issue sort of a perfunctory statement about what happened. It took the UN Secretary General Guterres seven weeks before he even acknowledged the reports of sexual violence on November 29th. And remember, this is the same UN Secretary General who used extraordinary measures that are not often used at the UN in order to get the ceasefire resolution before the United Nations Security Council.

And I would like to actually, and I've said this publicly, congratulate and affirm that the Biden administration did the right thing by vetoing that ceasefire resolution. They don't do everything right, but when they do something right I'm going to congratulate them, but we really do appreciate them standing up and there is something pervasive. There is a rot at the UN whenever it comes to dealing with Israel and dealing with the Jewish people. There's an ongoing genocide, an actual genocide in Xinjiang as certified by Republican and Democrat administrations. Trump and Biden don't agree on much, but they agree on the genocide in Xinjiang. There's obviously the ongoing war-

Morgan Ortagus:

... in Xinjiang. There's obviously the ongoing war against Ukraine perpetrated by the Russians where if you want to talk about indiscriminate bombings, there's a case. There's an example. The UN Secretary General has done nothing. He has not used extraordinary measures to try and deal with Russia's behavior in Ukraine or with the Chinese genocide in Xinjiang, but he reserves those extraordinary measures for the world's only Jewish state. I'm going to ask some questions to our panelists, but I want to remind everybody how horrific the day really was. Some of us have not been able to see the footage yet. We do have testimony from a female volunteer, for example, that stated that so many young females bodies, this was from the music festival, were so bloody that they dreaded opening the body bags out of fear of what they would find. Senator Ernst, I do know that the Senate was shown videos, and by the way, this is videos from Hamas footage.

They made these videos themselves because they wanted the world to see how barbaric and horrific they are. It was reported from Senator Schumer that after he viewed the video, he had to go sit by himself in his office for a half hour or an hour just to process what he saw. And I think most people in this room, and I appreciate everybody who's on the live stream, who are watching as well, have probably not seen the videos. It's grotesque stuff. If you have children, please they should probably not listen to this part of the conversation. But can you describe what you saw?

Sen. Joni Ernst:

Well, and Morgan, I'll be upfront about this. I did not go see the videos. I did not. I refused to go do that. I will not give glory to what Hamas has been doing, and I know there was a purpose behind doing this, and I appreciate that the viewing was made available for the members that needed to see it. I did not need to see it. I have served in uniform, I have served in wartime. I have not witnessed that type of tragedy, and I hope never to witness that type of tragedy. But I
can say personally, I can visualize exactly what happened, and I didn't need to have that affirmed by seeing the video.

As a mother, as someone who has been in violent situations before, it would take very little to mobilize me against Hamas in this situation. I have the heart of a warrior, and that does not end with taking off the uniform, so I did not need to see the video. I am going to fight for Israel. I'm going to fight for these women and men. In 2014, I had the distinct honor of visiting Kibbutz near Oz, and that Kibbutz was one of the hardest hit in the attack from Hamas. I hope to return to the Kibbutz very soon. There's very little left of it. I've heard from members that live on the Kibbutz, and it's been very difficult. Morgan, we had this conversation actually when the attacks were happening. I was in Saudi Arabia when the attacks happened, scheduled to go into Israel on October 8th.

I had been invited to speak at an event, and we were delayed a few days, obviously because of the attack. And when I was able to get in with my congressional delegation, which was a bipartisan bicameral delegation, it was on October 10th, and we were reeling from the stories that we heard from both the Israeli and the American families that we met with, and it was a very emotional time. And that was even before we learned about the further atrocities that were being committed after the kidnappings had occurred. We knew of what had happened in the Kibbutzim, but we had not yet heard about the continued rape and violence on the women that had been taken into Gaza.

Now we have further evidence of that, and it is our intent to return into that region and address the hostage issues as well as the treatment of those hostages. So my heart bleeds for those families and the members that were witnessing what was captured by Hamas on their body cam. I don't think that we should live in a world that condones this type of behavior and violence, and when innocent lives are met with violence, all I can do is wish that same level of violence upon those that commit those atrocities.

**Morgan Ortagus:**

For both of the Congresswomen, CNN has actually been great on this issue. Bianna Golodryga, Jake Tapper, and I'm blanking on the other woman's name, but CNN has actually grilled some of your Democratic colleagues, Jayapal and others, for their refusal to acknowledge what happened and to speak out against it. And of course, the first thing that they do, even if they moderately acknowledge it, they go immediately into attacking Israel. So for the both of you, I'm curious, what is the tone in the house? Do you think the majority of the house is taking this seriously, or do we, at least from the tweets, it appears that we have a pretty big anti-Semitism problem on parts of the far left?

**Rep. Beth Van Duyne:**

I did attend the-

**Morgan Ortagus:**

Oh, you did? Oh, great. Please share.

**Rep. Beth Van Duyne:**
Of the video, and we had a number of Democrats who were at that viewing as well.

Morgan Ortagus:

Good.

Rep. Beth Van Duyne:

Look, I represent North Texas, and last year we had one of our temples in Colleyville that had a terrorist that went to it, and many of you probably saw it. I went around to get a resolution. We were in the minority last session, last Congress, but it had more signatures, I think, than any piece of legislation, last session. So I think you have support not just from Republicans, but also from the majority of Democrats, but you have some that are very outspoken that don't really seem to care. I was up in Longworth looking down when they had the protest just a couple of weeks ago, and being led by one of our colleagues totally not condemning what Hamas had done. And when you look at those videos, and I didn't want to go see it either, I really didn't.

But unlike what happened during the Holocaust, when you are seeing these things firsthand that were taped, you need to see and witness the brutality so you can't say it never happened. When you are seeing how horrific one man can treat another, they were gunning these people down. They were hunting them like animals. They were treating them as if they had absolutely no empathy, no sympathy, no humanity. They were completely brutal. People need to see that firsthand. How can you deny that that's happening when you're watching it? This isn't a movie. And it was so obvious, by the way, the reactions of human bodies when they're being beaten. There was one that they, and I don't want to offend anybody, but again, these stories need to be told. This person was trying to cut off somebody's head using a hoe, and the person was still breathing and very much alive. Who does that?

And yet we're going to defend them. So yes, I believe you have within the house a lot of people who are sympathetic and are supportive. The question is, are we going to allow just the sympathy or are we going to actually put that into policy? The house, we pushed out a package to support Israel. We pushed it out almost immediately. It has been sitting in the Senate, and as supportive as Chuck Schumer is, he had to take those 30 minutes of time to breathe out. Why has he not gotten that package out? He's got a vehicle if he wants to help the Israeli people today, but he's playing politics with it, and that is where we should really start shaming these people. You have an ability to be able to help today take it and stop playing politics.

Morgan Ortagus:

Thank you, Congresswoman.

Rep. Julia Letlow:

I concur with Congresswoman, Beth Van Duyne. I think that you have the majority of support in the house. Again, you have a fringe of a certain amount of people that, and we all know their names, that are not speaking out against Hamas. So my concern doesn't necessarily lie there. I think the majority of the house is definitely in support. Where I'm really concerned is with our young people, and I have never seen such an uprising on college campuses. And again, I go back to it's my wheelhouse.
I taught, I was also in administration, and I've just never seen this kind of misinformation be circulated, and this uprising of young people. And you have to wonder where it's coming from, and we've talked about this. I think social media is such a powerful player in this whole narrative and specifically TikTok. And we have to start holding those players accountable for the misinformation while also telling these horrific stories of what really happened that day. So my concern really lies within our young people today, and how do we reach them? Where did we go wrong and how do we bring them back into moral clarity so that they can do better next time?

Morgan Ortagus:

That's such a good point. And I think that, I don't know if there's been a scarier time in modern American history for American Jews, especially young Jews on college campuses, as you said, than right now. That's a really sad and devastating fact, not only for the Jewish people but our country.

Rep. Beth Van Duyne:

One of the things we have to ask though is why are we using our taxpayer dollars to support that? So in ways and means, Chairman Smith has been very clear. We are investigating these universities. If you are promoting anti-Semitic behavior, that is not a public good and you should not be receiving taxpayer funds.

Morgan Ortagus:

Good for you, thank you.

Rep. Julia Letlow:

Cut off the grants.

Morgan Ortagus:

Rebecca, you and I have been in and out of the Middle East longer than I'm willing to admit, and studying it for a long time. And what was so interesting to me is until people were forced to see the pictures and videos, they did not want to believe that Hamas had actually done this. As you and I know, we could look at Yazidi women, we can look at how Iranian-backed militias in Iraq and throughout the Middle East, and even the regime itself, this is a feature, the sexual violence is a feature of how they terrorize populations. Can you just speak to that since you know the Middle East so well?

Rebeccah Heinrichs:

You're exactly right. I mean, this was something that I pointed out repeatedly. Some of the moral equivalents that I've seen from certain members of Congress saying, "Look, Israel commits crimes." So maybe there were some crimes that Hamas committed, but I don't really know, is the evidence even real or is Israel exaggerating it? I mean, this is something... I also have not seen the videos. It's really hard for me to even think about the specific acts mentally, so-
Seeing the videos, it's really hard for me to even think about the specific acts mentally. So as a mom of five children, and anytime I hear one of the stories of what happened on October 7th and the age of a child is identified as a mother, you immediately associate that age with your own child who's about that age. And so it's just very, very difficult for me to even think about.

But one of the things I've heard is that Hamas used sexual violence as a feature. What we mean by that as a feature as part of the planned act of the terror campaign, videotaped it and then when they called back home to tell their family about it, their family's rejoiced. So it was not something that was just in a... Not that this would make it any more understandable, but I think as human beings you try to make sense of it in some kind of category as a heat of a moment or a... I mean, this was a planned, intentional feature of the terror campaign meant to maximize the human suffering and the terrorism of the victims, but then also to reverberate to their family members to have to go on to note that this is something that they endured.

So it is a feature. And I just want to say something else too, because coming back to the point about college campuses is so important and I too worry continuously about Jewish students on campuses now. And part of it, I think, getting to the question of how did we get here with this moral equivocation and confusion, it's a steady diet of anti-Americanism in much of our public schools. It's the identity politics that is constantly breaking people up and identifying people based on their power structure, oppressed versus oppressor. And so you become... When you have that steady diet, even throughout your elementary years and junior high and high school, by the time you get to college and then you have teachers, your professors promoting this in its full flowering, you have anti-Semitism, a terrible ideology, but in this environment of all these other toxic ideologies and it spreads like wildfire.

And that's what our country, I think is seeing right now. And so there's multiple roots that have got to be pulled out and I just appreciate so much that leadership represented here on this panel that are really busy getting to the work of those roots.

Morgan Ortagus:

Well, speaking of that, we're going to have to get the senator and the congresswoman who are very busy back to the Hill to do their work. I'm going to let them give any closing remarks, but just want to again, thank all of you for coming. I promoted this for three hours on The Hugh Hewitt Show this morning. So I think we have a lot of people on the livestream and so appreciate everybody who's listening. And we're not going away. We are going to keep highlighting this. We're going to keep talking about it, and every time someone calls for a ceasefire, we are going to remind everybody what happened that day so that you can't look away. So Congressman and Senator, any closing remarks?

Sen. Joni Ernst:

Yes, I want to thank the Hudson Institute for hosting us today in this really important conversation. Again, to Rebecca's point, I mean this was the focus of the attacks really in highlighting the sexual violence against these women. It is just a step further that Hamas went with women. And we have seen this in Ukraine. We saw this done by the Wagner group. We saw it done by the Russian invaders that went into Ukraine. We heard the United Nations decry that. We have heard many other people speak to the atrocities in Ukraine. It was different in Israel because they were Jewish women. This goes back to the anti-Semitism that is not just permeated through the United States, but also through the United Nations. In the United States
in the Senate, we have our own work on anti-Semitism. Senator Cassidy and I sat down with an assistant secretary at the Department of Education just two weeks ago and talked about the investigations that were being done on anti-Semitism, not only on the college campuses, but also on our K through 12 schools.

It is rampant across America, and most Jewish students are afraid to even tell their classmates that they are Jewish because they are so scared. This is in direct violation, the anti-Semitism and the impeding of a student's ability to receive an education, it goes directly against Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. So we need our own government to step up and make sure they are doing the right thing. Anti-Semitism is not okay. The sexual violence that was perpetrated against these women and these men, it's not okay. And we must speak just as loudly and clearly about this violence as we have against any other population around the globe.

**Rep. Beth Van Duyne:**

I totally fully support those comments. All of us have a voice. For so long it seems like it's so much easier not to engage in a nasty discussion. You hear people talk about being divisive. You hear this woke culture, and it's so easy just to, "Okay, I'm just not going to engage. I don't care if it's at the Thanksgiving table. I'm just not going to engage. I don't want to get in fights with my friends. I see the stupid stuff that they post online." The problem is that when you don't call it out, it grows and it's gotten so much worse. So I would urge all of us to use our voices. Not in a bad way, not in a negative way, not in an aggressive way, but in a forceful strong way, smiles on our faces using reasoning, not getting personal. But we all have an opportunity to do that.

I went to the kibbutz that you were talking about last year, I visited that. And I took my son and we have talked a number of times about what we learned there, why they stayed, what it meant to them. Because he asked the question when we were hearing all these horrible things that are happening, then, that was last year. They were having balloons that would come over that were targeting children, so that when the children ripped off the tape to play with a ball that was attached to the balloon, it blew up. They had bomb shelters, 30 seconds to get to it, a minute to get to it. And he asked the question, "Why do you stay?" And I said, "Look at around the world. You think you're any safer in DC? Atrocities happen all the time. If we leave, we're giving up on our homeland. We're giving up on the people who are here. We will feel like we're failing. We stay together as a family because we're stronger that way. We're supporting our family."

These are our allies, our strongest allies in the Middle East. We need to stand with that family. We need to recognize what that homeland means, their right to exist. And when we see these atrocities, we need to call it out and we need to stop holding the hands of these children who seem to be running not only the country, not only Congress, but our universities. We need to stop with the hand holding, call them out and start being adults. Which goes by the way, for the CEOs of businesses who are on these boards of these universities who put up with it and push it because they think it sells their product. Enough is enough.

And from Congress, from the Senate, we need to figure out ways of stopping taxpayer dollars from incentivizing it, which is exactly what we've been doing and then we're shocked when we see the protests that we see across the country. So I know that we are busy on Ways and Means, getting to that. I know that the Senate is looking at ways as well, but if you have ideas out there, we are open. Let me know. So thank you guys very much. The Hudson Institute is awesome.
Rebeccah Heinrichs:

Thank you all so much for being here. I mean, the moral clarity is so important because from it comes sound policy, rape is not resistance and there's no moral equivocation about it. And we must be very, very clear, anytime we come across a friend or a colleague who starts to make any kind of excuse or defense from these atrocities on the part of Hamas, I think it's incumbent among all of us to say that there is actually no excuse for it, no defense of it, and to totally reject that moral equivalence. Thank you all so much. I know this is a deeply personal, difficult subject to talk about. It takes a lot of courage to come up here and do it, and so I'm so thankful for your leadership. Thank you, Morgan. Thank you all for taking so much of your time and attention to this critical issue. If you could please allow the panelists to exit the room before the rest of you stand up, that would be very helpful. Thank...