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- Senator Tim Scott, *United States Senator, South Carolina, and Presidential Candidate*
- Michael Doran, *Senior Fellow and Director, Center for Peace and Security in the Middle East*
- Sarah May Stern, *Chair, Hudson Institute Board of Trustees*

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A video of the event is available: [https://www.hudson.org/events/presidential-speech-series-tim-scott](https://www.hudson.org/events/presidential-speech-series-tim-scott)

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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.
Sarah Stern:

Good afternoon. I'm Sarah May Stern, the very proud chair of Hudson Institute, and it is my great honor this afternoon to be able to introduce in a minute Senator Tim Scott. But before I do, I have to put it in context of what we've seen in the last couple of days. As you may know, Hudson's mission is to promote American leadership for the security, freedom, and prosperity of America and our allies. Well, one of our allies, in fact, maybe our closest ally had that challenged over the weekend. It's hard for me to talk about it without getting emotional, but Israel may be our greatest friend. What Hamas did to Israel and its people, the barbarity unlike anything that has happened to one of our allies, and it touches me very personally, the beheading of babies, the rape, the murder, and we need to stand with our allies. Hudson stands with Israel.

That's the context in which Senator Scott will be addressing us this afternoon. I think everybody knows about his stellar biography. Born into poverty, raised by a wonderful single mom whom I've had the great opportunity to meet. She's just great. And then with fierce determination, great optimism, which fits the Hudson mission of Herman Kahn, and frankly, intellectual smarts, Senator Scott got himself a scholarship, went to college, worked in the free enterprise for a while, and then quickly found the call to serve his state working in South Carolina and then joined the House of Representatives, was elected to the House of Representatives and quickly moved over to the Senate side where he's served with distinction for the last 10 years on numerous committees, mainly working on domestic issues, but also, as you'll hear I think, on international issues as well.

So it is my great pleasure to welcome him to the stage. When he is done talking, he will be joined by Hudson Senior Fellow Mike Doran, who directs Hudson's Center for Mid East Peace and Security. We hope that between the two of them, maybe they can get some peace and security in the Mid East. Please join me in welcoming Senator Scott.

Tim Scott:

Thank you very much. Thank you. I appreciate your passion. I share your anger. The atrocities that we've seen are just inhuman, unbelievable, and the hearts and minds of the American people have been filled with heartbreak and, frankly, righteous anger for our friends and our allies, the people of Israel.

The terrorist attacks on innocent children, women and men were disgusting. But as you said, it wasn't just attacks, it included the beheading of babies. I can't think of something more vile, disgusting, and heartbreaking at the same time in thinking about the devastation brought not just to our ally, but to our friend, Israel.

A music festival was turned into a killing field. Women and children thrown into the back of trucks and kidnapped. The bodies of the innocent paraded around the streets like they were trophies, hundreds upon hundreds of dead and still they're counting and even more still missing. A thousand deaths in Israel is equivalent to 36,000 dead Americans. Think about that. A country of just nine million people or so losing a thousand people would feel like in our nation the loss of 36,000 Americans.

New reports this morning suggest that dozens and dozens of babies were mutilated. That is evil personified. And the murder victims and the hostages include Americans. We heard just
minutes ago we’re up to at least 14 dead Americans and no idea of how many hostages are Americans.

America stands with Israel in sorrow, in solidarity, and in strength of resolve that these heinous acts of war will not go unanswered and they will not go unpunished. Our nation is founded upon the Judeo-Christian rock. And as a Christian, I believe we first follow Romans 12:15 that reminds us to mourn with those who mourn. And so our prayers are with Israel and our Jewish friends.

But we must also stand shoulder to shoulder with our friends when it is time to turn to the next chapter. Romans 13:4 reminds us if you do wrong, be afraid for God’s servants or agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoers. These despicable acts deserve nothing less than the full measure of justice. The people behind them need to feel the wrath of God and they need to meet some Israeli or American military hardware to help them get there soon.

It is not enough for the United States of America to simply condemn this kind of aggression. We need leaders who will stop inviting this kind of aggression. President Obama’s own defense secretary famously said that Joe Biden was on the wrong side of every major question in foreign policy and national security for the last 40 years. So tragically, it is no surprise that President Biden’s term has been a disaster for our security, our vital interests, and our allies, particularly in the Middle East.

Every time they have chosen weakness and appeasement, every time America has been passive, it has sent the most dangerous signal to bad actors all over the world. American hesitation, American weakness smells like one thing to bad actors. It smells like blood in the water. Look at President Biden’s humiliating surrender in Afghanistan. It cost 13 American soldiers their lives and cost us our credibility and deterrence. It signaled to terrorists that with a little bit of effort, this administration will allow the United States to be outfought, outsmarted, and outlasted. Look at Biden telling Putin just before he invaded Ukraine that a minor incursion might not be so bad.

Time after time, Joe Biden has revealed a lack of backbone and it is costing us in dear lives. It is not just hesitation or incompetence. It’s a pattern of foolish policy choices that have undermined us and our allies. The last time Joe Biden was part of an administration, he and President Obama sent pallets of cash to Iran, rewarding Tehran while supporting terrorism and pursuing nuclear weapons. Republicans shouted from the rooftops that Iran’s terrorist proxies, including Hamas and Hezbollah, were going to reap part of the windfall. But the left wanted so desperately to cozy up to Iran. They didn’t care how much American money ended up in the pockets of Israel’s enemies.

Just a few weeks ago, President Biden sent the same signal again. He rewarded Iran for taking American hostages by unlocking $6 billion for the mullahs. The administration swears the money can only be spent for humanitarian needs, but how naive can you be? Money is fungible. We just gave a terrorist-supporting regime billions of dollars and room in their budget. The president of Iran came right out and said they’ll spend the money however they want, whenever they want on whatever they want.

And it’s not just about Joe Biden’s weakness and appeasement towards Iran. This administration has also found other ways to create daylight between us and Israel. Joe Biden has interfered in Israeli domestic politics and tried to weaken Prime Minister Benjamin
Netanyahu. He slow walked inviting him to the White House and practically made him beg for that invitation while the world sat back and watched as if Israel is somehow a second-class ally that Joe Biden is stuck with, and the thugs and the killers, they took notice.

Even after these historic attacks, the Biden administration's newly established Office of Palestinian Affairs published a statement that tried to tie Israel's hands by saying, and I quote, "All sides should refrain from further action." They had to delete the post after so much backlash. Lord have mercy. There is no both sides. There is no moral equivalency. We're talking about terrorists killing innocent people. There is right and there is wrong. It's black and white, and there should be no doubt where our loyalties as a nation lie.

We have seen the face of evil. The President of the United States has a moral duty to lead with strength and clarity. So while Hamas carried out these attacks, Joe Biden has blood on his hands. His weakness invited the attack. His cash giveaways to Iran helped fund terrorism. And after the attack, his administration suggested that Israel just stand down. It's a disgrace. We need a president who is loyal to our allies, yet lethal to our adversaries because weakness has never purchased peace. Being passive is a provocation.

President Reagan once said of the four wars in his lifetime, none came, none came about because America was too strong. Safety takes readiness and resolve. Security requires strength. So why have two consecutive Democrat administrations behaved this way? Republicans won historic victories of the Abraham Accords and brought Israel and the Arab world closer together. Why did the Biden Democrats waste no time reversing that progress and disrespecting our ally? The answer is simple, but it's disturbing. The far left in this country has become incredibly hostile to the state of Israel. The most extreme statements have become a daily routine. They even dabble openly in anti-Semitism. But President Biden will not stand up to them because he caress more about political power.

This past weekend, Congresswoman Cori Bush put out a statement suggesting the Palestinians are equal victims and calling Israel a military occupation and apartheid. Her colleague Omar has a history of anti-Israel statements that have been so offensive and so anti-Semitic that even House Democrats and Nancy Pelosi had to rebuke her.

Their fellow squad member AOC has said supporting Israel means taking the side of occupation. The friend Congresswoman Jayapal has copy/pasted Hamas propaganda to call Israel racist. And this past week, Congresswoman Tlaib went full on victim blaming. She said Israel is apartheid and responsible for the cycle of violence. She said Israel is responsible for the cycle of violence. Let that just soak in for a minute. The ones being attacked, the ones being devastated, the ones hearing and feeling the power and the pain of 4,500 rockets are somehow the ones responsible for the violence. As we speak, she continues to fly the Palestinian flag in the taxpayer-funded hallway outside of her office.

These same people support the anti-Semitic BDS. BDS for those who may not be familiar with it, it's a movement that calls for economic warfare against Israel through boycotts and sanctions simply because the Jewish state dares to exist. And several of them put those bigoted boycotts into practice themselves just a few months ago. They boycotted President Herzog's speech to Congress and voted against a pro-Israel resolution. I said at that time that giving aid and comfort to anti-Semitism was a dangerous, reckless signal for members of Congress to send. But even before Israel has buried its dead, even with hostages still in captivity, they began
doubling and tripling down more toxic rhetoric, more victim blaming, more fake moral equivalence between good and evil.

President Biden and other progressives pretend they’re different. And I really wish that they were. I wish that they were respectable. I wish they were moderate. I wish they were grownups. But their actions tell a very different story because it seems like, it feels like, and the evidence points to their a priority is power. Neither Hakeem Jeffries or Chuck Schumer or Joe Biden or Kamala Harris have said a single word this past week to repudiate the insane reckless reactions to the attacks from their own side.

We've seen the DSA socialists and far left activists pour into the streets of New York and Chicago to praise the terrorists and insult Israel. Mass demonstrations taking the terrorists side. And radical student groups at our elite universities are putting out despicable statements, taking the side of the killers. We are talking about Americans celebrating terrorism, celebrating the killings and the kidnappings, calling for the eradication of Israel from the river to the sea.

These are the same groups that put the Squad in Congress, the same people who decide Democrat primary elections. Several of the representatives I just named are members of the DSA themselves. Where are the repudiations? Where are the primary challenges? Why will neither Joe Biden or Kamala Harris say a single thing about any of this? Because it's about power and they'll do anything to hang on to their power.

They they'll weaponize race and class here at home. They will tell hope-stealing lies about the nature of systemic racism in our country. They call America an evil country, and they give aid and comfort to extremists who are not just anti-Israel, anti-Semitic. Radical liberals are choosing their own political power over peace. They would rather invite attacks on our allies than stand up to the fringe elements within their party.

This is not all Democrats. This is not all Democrats. This is a radical, extreme element that refuse to stand up to their own party. It is cowardice that makes them complicit, and it has to stop. We need to eliminate racist, socialist, anti-Semitic DSA from American politics. If the DSA and their friends are going to behave like a hate group, we should treat them like a hate group. And we should stop, we should stop pretending it's normal or okay that the most famous, most prominent House Democrats in the country are joined at the hip with the DSA. Every member of the Squad should either quit the DSA and repudiate the people who are cheering on deadly terrorism or they should be expelled from Congress.

We need a policy of strength and leadership. Number one, we need to rescue the American hostages and get them out and back home period. We need to bring those Americans home this very instant. We should use, if necessary, our special operation forces if that's what it takes. And the President needs to stop hosting White House barbecues and picnics and putting a lid at lunchtime until our fellow citizens are safe. We need a commander in chief who will put the world on notice with a policy that is very, very simple. If you take an American life, it will cost you yours and we will make sure of it.

Number two, Hamas needs to be wiped from the face of the earth. Simple. Decades of America's investment has helped Israel possess the hardware and the capabilities they need to do just that. But as we are already seeing this new war is going to be a burden and a struggle even for an ally as well-prepared as this one. Israel is going to need our support. They’re going to need our help. They're going to need our cooperation. And they are going to need our ammo.
And when I'm in the Oval Office, if Israel finds itself needing anything, one phone call to my White House is all it will take.

When America's allies need to reload, the arsenal of democracy has to be stocked and ready. When I'm president, we will never send out pathetic and weak statements trying to stop our allies from responding when they're attacked. My secretary of state will not publicly call for a premature ceasefire and then have to delete the tweet. The only words out of the president's mouth and President Biden's mouth should be how can we help?

And more broadly, America needs to bring back a Middle East policy that treats our allies like allies and our enemies like enemies. No more desperate cuddling up to Iran. No more plane loads of cash to terrorist sponsors. No more condescending lectures and hostile gestures to our strongest ally in the region and the only democracy in the Middle East.

As a top Republican on the Senate Banking Committee, I have legislation to strengthen and extend our Iran sanctions. When I'm president, I'll sign it into law. And earlier today, I called upon Secretary Janet Yellen to testify on the $6 billion slush fund. They need to explain to us and to the country what in the world could they possibly be thinking. We also need to shut off the funding that Joe Biden restarted to the UN's irredeemably flawed Palestinian aid programs. The best investment we can make in peace and stability is 100% support for Israel.

We need to strengthen our intelligence-sharing partnership so a surprise like this never happens again. We need to restart the momentum of the Abraham Accords and continue to help Israel gain respect and recognition throughout the Arab region. We need to safeguard our national security and our homeland, and that starts with closing our insecure, unsafe, and wide-open Southern border. Scores of people on the terrorist watch list have tried to cross our Southern border. People from Syria, Iran, Yemen, Pakistan have been found breaking into our nation. And those are just the ones that we caught.

We need to regain the high ground with a president who is strong, not a president who's asleep at the wheel, not a president who will tolerate extremists and anti-Semites to protect his own power. Israel is not too much. Israel is not too much to ask for the Jewish people. Speaking as a Christian, our elder brothers and sisters in faith have suffered. They have suffered enough the history of European anti-Semitism, then the Holocaust, now 75 years of hatred, rocket fire, and terrorism.

Geographically, Israel is a small fingernail in a massive stretch of majority Muslim countries, almost 5,000 miles from the Atlantic Coast of Africa to India's border with Pakistan. The people of Israel are not asking too much. They have made generous offer after generous offer that the Palestinian leaders have simply and outright rejected. They simply want to live in peace. It's a human right, and it is non-negotiable.

Let me conclude with this. I will always condemn anti-Semitism, appeasement and weakness on the radical left, but I will also call out weakness or confusion among conservatives as well. It is not an equal problem. Hear me clearly. It is not an equal problem, but it is indeed a problem.

Vivek Ramaswamy has said that the definition of success is reducing America's support for Israel. And he's proposed that we surrender Taiwan to the Chinese Communist Party as long as we've relocated some factories. Governor DeSantis once dismissed Russia's invasion of
Ukraine as just a territorial dispute. The last thing we need is a Joe Biden Republican Party wing on foreign policy.

It's also a mistake and it is very damaging when Republicans keep repeating that our nation is a nation in decline. They paint a picture of some failing empire that needs to cut our losses and pull up the drawbridge. That idea is dead wrong, but it is also very, very dangerous. The American people are not in decline. American courage and American values are not in decline. We are just stuck with a weak President who is in retreat.

Joe Biden has America retreating from safety on our streets and security at our borders. He has us retreating from stable prices and supply chains, retreating from the very core values that have made America exceptional, and retreating from peace through American strength abroad. We aren't in decline. We are in a Biden retreat. Good news is all we need is a new leader to turn it around.

I'm running for president to restore peace through strength, to double down on American power. We need a commander in chief who is loyal to our allies and lethal to our adversaries with resolve that is beyond any question. And when I am president, there will not be one terrorist, not one anti-Semite on the face of the earth who doubts for one second that America has Israel's back.

So allow me to close with a prayer from the prophet Isaiah for Jerusalem. It's in Isaiah 62. And it says, "Because I love Zion, I will not be silent. Because my heart yearns for Jerusalem, I cannot remain silent. I will not stop praying for her until her righteousness shines like the dawn and her salvation blazes like a burning torch. May the Lord hold you in his hand for all to see, a splendid crown in the hand of God." May God's mercy comfort Israel today. May God's justice protect Israel tomorrow. And may God bless the United States of America. Thank you. (silence)

**Michael Doran:**

Secrets here already.

**Tim Scott:**

I'll tell you what. Yes, yes, yes.

**Michael Doran:**

Nothing clearly. So I would characterize your remarks, I was thinking about what your philosophy is and I wrote here at the top peach through strength. That's what I heard.

**Tim Scott:**

Yes.

**Michael Doran:**

Is that a fair characterization of your...
Tim Scott:

Very fair.

Michael Doran:

... view of foreign policy?

Tim Scott:

Absolutely. So important.

Michael Doran:

Tell us how you came to it.

Tim Scott:

I think if you look back through our history, especially the last 50 years of history, you can't not think of Ronald Reagan and his peace through strength philosophy, one that was embedded into our culture and one that, frankly, allowed us to sleep with peace and not see wars that we've seen around the world today. We didn't see it then for a reason. The more capable and the more powerful, the more resilient, the more responsive the American military, the American power, the safer the world is and safer we are at the home front.

One of the things I've said on the campaign trail a few months ago, gosh, June or July, that if we are not prepared to engage in conflict on three different continents, at the Indo-Pacific, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, we are unprepared. And you look at the focus of our military and you see how unfocused it has been over the last couple of years. It actually invites problems.

One of the things that Ronald Reagan understood in a powerful way that if you want to keep America safe, you want to keep American safe, if you want to strengthen our allies and strengthen our resolve, then you have to have a really big stick. You really have to invest your resources in power in order to keep bullies and dictators off your porch. At the end of the day, the one thing they understand more than any other thing is power. And if you want to not have to use power, have power. Holding hands and singing Kumbaya is only a strategy for more pain, more misery, more suffering, and more death.

Michael Doran:

Did you always understand this or is this a realization you came to over time? I agree with you 100%, but when I was younger...

Tim Scott:

I'm not sure what I understood.

Michael Doran:
... I entertained some heretical thoughts.

**Tim Scott:**

Yeah. I can't tell you when it hit me the hardest. I will say that I never served in the military, but my dad served for... And I wasn't raised with him, but I always admired his service, especially his service in Vietnam. He served 27 years, I think and nine months in the Air Force.

I have two brothers, I have an ugly brother and a good-looking brother. Everybody has one probably. My ugly brother served 26 years in the Air Force as a colonel and went to the Air Force Academy. My good-looking brother served 32 years as a command sergeant major, retiring in the Army. 85 years between those guys. And the one thing I understood growing up was the importance of a strong military, the importance of investing in our military. And with two of those three having served in theater, one of the things that you know they want is a clear objective and the ability to come home safe.

**Michael Doran:**

Of your two brothers, the ugly one and the handsome one, which is the smarter?

**Tim Scott:**

Actually, unfortunately, the good-looking guy got the brains too.

**Michael Doran:**

The sergeant major.

**Tim Scott:**

He did, yes. Think about it this way. At Thanksgiving I sit at the kiddie table because the command sergeant major goes first, colonel goes second, then the little kids go next, and then the senators go finally. It's a level of disrespect I can't appreciate, but I've learned to live with it.

**Michael Doran:**

You brought up Vivek Ramaswamy.

**Tim Scott:**

Yes, sir.

**Michael Doran:**

And he's on my mind today.

**Tim Scott:**

Yes, sir.
Michael Doran:

Because I watched his interview on Tucker Carlson and they were tacking away. They were definitely tacking away from support for Israel.

Tim Scott:

Yes, sir.

Michael Doran:

Delicately, they didn't...

Tim Scott:

Absolutely.

Michael Doran:

Just, "Well, yeah, this is very bad. We have to understand good from bad, but." And then, of course, the only thing that matters is after the but.

Tim Scott:

Right.

Michael Doran:

Yeah. I mean, if you want to attack them personally, that's fine. But if...

Tim Scott:

I don't want to attack them personally. But I do want to attack their philosophy, their policy.

Michael Doran:

Well, this is what I wanted to get at...

Tim Scott:

Yes, sir.

Michael Doran:

... is that I see them... I'm surprised to see a wing of the Republican Party tacking away from Israel. How do you explain that and what do we do about it?
Tim Scott:

I think there’s a populous movement that somehow says isolationism can be a choice that we make and the rest of the world will say, “Okay, we’ll leave you alone.” They’ve forgotten the philosophy of a Little Satan in a Big Satan, that they’ve forgotten world history, that America, all good will be attacked and not to think so is to be naive.

So the best way to make sure that you're not attacked is to be as prepared as humanly possible. And then if you are attacked, overwhelming force so that your enemies no longer exist and can't do it again. And what I see in some of these folks is this theory that you can sing Kumbaya. If you just give people what they want, it’s going to be okay. I've never figured out how giving a bully what they want stops a bully from wanting more.

Michael Doran:

Right.

Tim Scott:

It's like the old saying, if you give a mouse a cookie, they're going to want a cup of milk. It's just true.

Michael Doran:

Did you just make that saying up? I never heard that saying.

Tim Scott:

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. Typically, they use mice and cheese. I decided to go to chocolate chip cookies and the aroma, but I didn't make it up, it was somebody else's. But the fact of the matter is it is fascinating, i.e. frustrating that there are people who really believe that if we just disengage.

Michael Doran:

I know I spent several years in the Ivy League, so I did a PhD on this.

Tim Scott:

So you understand it better than I.

Michael Doran:

What smart people or educated people believe in.

Tim Scott:

Unbelievable.

Michael Doran:
Yeah.

**Tim Scott:**

I will tell you, I grew up in tough neighborhoods. My friends, unfortunately some were shot, some were buried, and some were locked up. And I can tell you the one thing you cannot do in a tough neighborhood is to assume that being just polite and kind is enough. You should be optimistic, you should be positive, but if someone hits you, make sure they never want to do it again.

**Michael Doran:**

Why do you think though, this is coming up on the populist right? So let me put it to you another way. Are you getting this what we saw last night from Vivek and Tucker? Are you hearing that from your own constituents? Because when I hear you talk, that's what I heard growing up.

**Tim Scott:**

Yeah. So there is no doubt that some would say the Reagan doctrine, the Reagan philosophy is frankly Vivek said it, morning in America is over. It's not. And so if you couple that theory that we should pull the drawbridge up, as I talked about, if you couple that with this notion that somehow America is a nation in decline and the best thing we can do to shore up ourselves is to focus only on America and somehow that will give us the insulation, the protection our people need to be safe. Unfortunately, what we've seen is exactly the opposite through human history and, frankly, in modern times.

One of the things you see in modern times, I said this really six or seven years ago when we paid $400 million, ran some payments under the Obama administration, I said literally then that that will actually increase the price on American heads and this payment actually creates a market for hostages.

**Michael Doran:**

Yeah.

**Tim Scott:**

And don't think Hamas wasn't paying attention because they were. And there's a reason why they want to exchange these hostages at some point. And I got to tell you, sitting down today and having a serious conversation about the future of this conflict, I would put it in the words a complete siege that will lead to a complete victory and it will require our complete support.

**Michael Doran:**

You told me earlier that you saw Ambassador Herzog today.

**Tim Scott:**

I did.
Michael Doran:

And can you share any of that conversation with us, especially the secrets?

Tim Scott:

The biggest secret is not a secret. Israel lives by the mantra never again. They are deadly serious about it. The one thing I can tell you I walked away from talking with the ambassador was that man has tremendous clarity, serious resolve. We talked about proportional. What is a proportional response? You keep hearing people talk about a proportional response. His theory of a proportional response was making sure that they just wipe Hamas’ military capabilities off the map. He says that's proportional because this...

Michael Doran:

Which is almost what you said. You went a step further.

Tim Scott:

I went a smidge further. I think I frankly listened to him and wove part of his philosophy into a few of my thoughts and my comments because I wanted to capture that steel. He was somber, but not deflated. He was struck, but it created a fierceness in him that the resolve of every single person in that government is to eliminate the threat whatever it takes. And the necessity of a strong ally with no daylight is really important.

Michael Doran:

I totally agree. We should have about as much sympathy for Hamas as we had for ISIS and Al-Qaeda, don’t you think?

Tim Scott:

Absolutely. One of the things that he said was Hamas is just like ISIS.

Michael Doran:

Yeah. Well, after this weekend, it's hard to disagree with him.

Tim Scott:

Absolutely agree.

Michael Doran:

So another theme that you wove through your remarks was the connection between domestic politics and foreign politics.

Tim Scott:
Michael Doran:

Foreign policy. I found it interesting that Israel is really right in the intersection between the two.

Tim Scott:

Absolutely.

Michael Doran:

Have you always felt that or is that again something that you came to?

Tim Scott:

I think from a global perspective that has been an evolution. I've felt that way domestically. I've seen the strength of... Our first weapon in conflict against our adversaries is really a strong economy. The stronger your economy, the more flexibility, the more opportunity you have to also avoid conflict if you have a really big stick.

And one of the things I did, gosh, 2015, 2014, 2015, I can't remember the year to be honest with you, but I went to Israel. I sat down with then President Peres. Netanyahu was the prime minister. And I sat with just one other member and a few staff members for about two hours listening to this incredibly powerful, really amazing historian, brilliant mind and tactician talk about the importance of making sure that as far as he could, he wanted to make Israel and the Jewish people indispensable in the Middle East. He felt like if he, while Bibi is creating the type of a military and the military response, he had an opportunity to hopefully create an economic engine, a technology wonder that everyone in the Middle East, the 400 million I think he said Muslims would see Israel as the epicenter of technology, incredibly indispensable and necessary, that he would create a defense system, but not with brick and mortar but out of necessity.

And he felt like if he could do that, he could create the kind of panacea that did not require the elimination of people because he felt like there was an equilibrium in the country. And that really helped accelerate my global view of the importance of economic resourcefulness and technological advancement and scientific discovery as a key component of one's defense system, particularly...

Michael Doran:

Component.

Tim Scott:

Component. Not the only one. You cannot have that without the peace and strength.

Michael Doran:
Looking over last weekend though, it looks like they went a little bit too far.

**Tim Scott:**

I can't say.

**Michael Doran:**

And we're doing the same thing, I think.

**Tim Scott:**

I do think that we should be very careful as Americans, and this is where the isolationists really get under my skin a little bit. I think we should be very careful to assume that our greatness comes from our money. That a good economy is all it takes to keep peace. That's not the case. One of the things that he said even then was it's the strength and the firepower and the willingness to use it of Prime Minister Netanyahu that allowed for the prosperity and the success of the technological advancements that they had and were developing.

I say to all of us here that to depending purely on our economic wherewithal is a weak strategy. But not thinking about it from a primary perspective is also a weak strategy. Coupling that with a powerful military, the most powerful force on earth, is a fantastic strategy that most likely allows us not to engage our military.

Think about the fact that we as a nation, we've never seen a competitor that is economically on our same page. It's one of the reasons why so many of us are paying really close attention to China because the Chinese Communist Party is about 90% economically where we are. We've never seen someone closer than 60%. And so the economic reality that now exists puts us in a different position, in a different posture. And it requires us to be very careful on things like intellectual property because if it's exported or stolen from us to be used to compete against us, that causes the kind of consternation that is problematic.

If you watch the expansion of the Chinese military and their nuclear state, their goal is to have a multiple of five times the nuclear weapons, I think by 2035. So they see where we are and they're accelerating. Their vessels, they're growing exponentially fast. Now, good news is our quality is superior. But their numbers are problematic. And then frankly, you take into consideration their next generation jets and AI. Couple that with hypersonic technology and weapons.

When I was on the Armed Services Committee, the one thing that came out very clearly was, I forgot the name, but the assistant secretary said, "If we can't see it, we can't stop it." We are not yet ready for the hypersonic conversation. The good news is we've made a lot of progress since 2018. The challenging news is the reason why Jim Mattis, I believe it was, and our leaders at the time went from a counterterrorism strategy to a near peer competitor strategy is because both China and Russia posed the existential threat that required the paradigm shifting decision of our military brass in 2017, 2018 to manifest in our current strategy from a military standpoint.

**Michael Doran:**
Where do you put Iran in that mix and do you think we've taken our eye off the ball on Iran?

Tim Scott:

Well, we've been naive and I'm not sure how you're naive with Iran, by the way. Iran is, in my estimation, the new axis of evil that's rising. It's Russia, China, and Iran.

Michael Doran:

Right.

Tim Scott:

So if that's true, and I think it is true, Iran is a critical component of it. Every time we degrade the Russian military, we keep more Americans safe. When we see Iran's just terrible actions of funding. One of the things I walked away today is that 90%...

Michael Doran:

Talked away in your conversation with the ambassador?

Tim Scott:

Yes. 90% of the funding for Hamas comes from Iran. Just think about that as a part of this axis of evil.

Michael Doran:

And the Secretary of State said that there's no sign that Iran had anything to do with this attack.

Tim Scott:

Yeah. I would say hogwash, which is Southern polite for, hogwash is all I can say up here. But here's one of the telling signs. It was when the president of Iran said, actually Hamas said to Iran, "Thank you for your help."

Michael Doran:

That's an indicator.

Tim Scott:

It might be an indicator.

Michael Doran:

Yeah, yeah.
Tim Scott:
And the president of Iran said, "You don't tell us what to do with the money. We will do whatever we want.

Michael Doran:
Another indicator.

Tim Scott:
I call those breadcrumbs.

Michael Doran:
Yeah.

Tim Scott:
And where do they lead? And another thing that I thought was really important in this conversation, especially between... What we know is that Hamas, Hezbollah, Iran, the relationship is deep, long, and lucrative. So...

Michael Doran:
Another indicator.

Tim Scott:
... at some point...

Michael Doran:
You need to reassess their...

Tim Scott:
Yeah. If you're looking for the target and you can put on a blindfold and you can spin yourself around a hundred times and you still cannot miss the target, chances are that's a sign. And this is a target you cannot miss. I think the evidence will prove that over time.

Michael Doran:
All right. Well, why don't we end on that note, unless you have anything else you'd like to tell us. Is there something I should have asked you that I didn't?

Tim Scott:
Not on Iran. We certainly have a complicated world that we should spend some time thinking through and talking through from Eastern Europe to the challenges that we're seeing with our NATO partners, continues with Ukraine to the challenges that we're going to have in Indo-Pacific of the assets that we have, the assets we need to move, and the economic strategy. We've got a lot of work to do.

**Michael Doran:**

Who should we vote for for president?

**Tim Scott:**

I'm going to give you one person, I'll even give you his website. Vote timscott.com.

**Michael Doran:**

Okay. Thank you very much.

**Tim Scott:**

Thank you, sir.