

2016 2ND QUARTER MEET THE PRESS TOPICS

Chuck Todd is NBC News Political Director and the moderator of "Meet the Press," the flagship Sunday Morning public affairs program and longest-running broadcast in television history.

"Meet the Press" is seen on the NBC Television Network from 9-10 a.m. ET in most markets. In New York City and Washington D.C., the broadcast is seen from 10:30-11:30 a.m. ET.

The program re-airs on MSNBC Sunday afternoons at 2 p.m. ET/11 a.m. PT and again at 2 a.m. ET/11 p.m. PT and 4 a.m. ET/1 a.m. PT Monday. At these times, "Meet The Press" will also air on SIRIUS channel 90 and XM channel 120.

Please check local listings or the "Meet the Press" website (<http://www.nbcnews.com/meet-the-press>) for television and radio broadcast times in your area or to get transcripts of the show. Follow us on Twitter @MeetThePress and @NBCNewsPR.

COMING UP ON "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD" 3/6/16: ROMNEY, GRAHAM, SPACEY; ALSO: NEW MICHIGAN POLL FROM NBC/WSJ/MARIST

INTERVIEW WITH FORMER GOV. MITT ROMNEY, 2012 REPUBLICAN PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE

Former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney delivered a scathing speech on Thursday attacking Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump. He speaks with moderator Chuck Todd live Sunday morning to discuss the Republican Party's path to nomination.

"Donald Trump is a phony, a fraud. His promises are as worthless as a degree from Trump University. He's playing the American public for suckers: He gets a free ride to the White House and all we get is a lousy hat." - Former Gov. Romney in a speech Thursday

###

INTERVIEW WITH SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-S.C.)

South Carolina Senator Lindsey Graham, who ended his presidential bid for the Republican nomination in December, has not hidden his disdain for fellow congressman Senator Ted Cruz in the past, so it was surprising this past Super Tuesday when he indicated support for Cruz. Graham joins "Meet the Press" to address the future of the Republican Party.

"Ted Cruz is not my favorite by any means, but ... we may be in a position where we have to rally around Ted Cruz as the only way to stop Donald Trump." - Sen. Graham on CBS this past Tuesday

###

INTERVIEW WITH ACTOR KEVIN SPACEY, NETFLIX'S "HOUSE OF CARDS"

Actor Kevin Spacey, who plays Frank Underwood on Netflix's "House of Cards," joins Chuck Todd live in-studio Sunday morning to discuss the show's new season, which went live on Friday, and how it mirrors politics in real life.

"For those of us climbing to the top of the food chain, there can be no mercy. There is but one rule: hunt or be hunted." - Frank Underwood on "House of Cards"

###

NEW MICHIGAN POLL NUMBERS FROM NBC NEWS/WSJ/MARIST

New numbers from NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist debut on "Meet the Press" with the latest insight from the ground in Michigan ahead of the state's primary for both parties this Tuesday.

###

THE WEEK IN POLITICS

Is Trump unstoppable? Did Romney's Thursday speech sway Republican voters? Because the majority of Saturday's nominating contests are closed, will Senator Cruz benefit the most? The political roundtable discusses all of this and more from the week in politics.

David Brooks

Columnist, The New York Times

Stephen Henderson

Columnist, The Detroit Free Press

Mary Matalin

Republican Strategist

Kelly O'Donnell

NBC News Capitol Hill Correspondent

UPDATED: COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD” 3/13/16: TRUMP, SEN. CRUZ, GOV. KASICH; PLUS: NEW OH, FL, IL POLL NUMBERS

INTERVIEW WITH DONALD TRUMP, PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump joins the show to discuss recent disturbances at his campaign events as well as his path to the nomination.

"There are two different Donald Trumps. There's the one you see on the stage and there's the one who is very cerebral, sits there and considers things very carefully." - Ben Carson in his endorsement of the candidate on Friday

###

INTERVIEW WITH SEN. TED CRUZ (R-TEXAS), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

After picking up his first congressional endorsement this week (Sen. Mike Lee) and one from the National Review, Texas Senator Ted Cruz speaks with Chuck Todd about his victories in seven states and how he'll work with his rivals against Donald Trump.

"Donald does well with voters who have relatively low information, who are not that engaged and who are angry and they see him as an angry voice." – Sen. Ted Cruz in an interview Wednesday with CBN

###

INTERVIEW WITH GOV. JOHN KASICH (R-OHIO), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Ohio Gov. John Kasich addresses how he feels ahead of the state's primary Tuesday, rumors of home state support from Sen. Marco Rubio's campaign and his thoughts on the current state of the Republican Party.

"If you're a Republican primary voter in Ohio, and you don't want Donald Trump to be the nominee, John Kasich is your best bet." – Rubio campaign spokesperson Alex Conant

###

NEW OHIO, FLORIDA & ILLINOIS POLL NUMBERS FROM NBC NEWS/WSJ/MARIST

Ahead of Tuesday's nominating contests, new polls from NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist debut on "Meet the Press" with the latest insight from the ground in Ohio, Florida and Illinois.

###

THE WEEK IN POLITICS

Will the primary season last another three months? How much responsibility does a candidate bear for what happens at his or her events? What can we expect from this coming Tuesday's primaries? The roundtable discusses all of this and more from the week in politics.

Alex Castellanos

Republican Strategist

Anne Gearan

Political Correspondent, The Washington Post

Hugh Hewitt

Host, "The Hugh Hewitt Show"

Doris Kearns Goodwin

American Biographer; Author, "Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream"

COMING UP ON "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD" 3/20/16: KASICH; MCCONNELL, REID ON SCOTUS NOMINEE; SCHMIDT, STEVENS ON 'STOP TRUMP' MOVEMENT

INTERVIEW WITH GOV. JOHN KASICH (R-OHIO), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

After winning his home state primary earlier this week, Ohio Gov. John Kasich speaks with Chuck Todd about the 'Stop Trump' movement, his pledge earlier this week to not hold his tongue when it comes to Republican presidential frontrunner Donald Trump and his path to the party nomination.

"I'm not interested in being combative, but every once in a while, when you see something that makes your blood boil, I think you should say something about it." - Gov. Kasich in a Yahoo! News interview this week

###

HOW CONGRESS IS REACTING TO SCOTUS NOMINEE GARLAND

President Obama's nomination of Judge Merrick B. Garland on Wednesday has ignited debate across the aisle, as congressional Republican leaders continue to pledge they will not take any action during the president's lame duck year. Todd talks with the Senate leaders of both parties about where the fight is headed.

Senator Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

"It seems clear that President Obama made this nomination not with the intent of seeing the nominee confirmed but in order to politicize it for purposes of the election." - Sen. McConnell on Wednesday

Senate Minority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.)

"Why can't the Republicans do what they're supposed to do, do their jobs?" - Sen. Reid on Thursday

###

BEHIND THE 'STOP TRUMP' MOVEMENT

Republican strategists Steve Schmidt and Stuart Stevens join Todd to discuss why party opponents still don't have a unified strategy to stop Trump from becoming the GOP presidential nominee.

Steve Schmidt

MSNBC Contributor; Former Strategist, 2008 McCain Presidential Campaign

Stuart Stevens

Former Strategist, 2012 Romney Presidential Campaign

"We are committed to ensuring a real conservative candidate is elected. We believe that neither Hillary Clinton nor Donald Trump, a Hillary Clinton donor, is that person." - Thursday statement from Conservatives Against Trump

COMING UP ON "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD" 3/27/16: SEN. SANDERS; GOV. KASICH; LEITER, ENGEL ON NATIONAL SECURITY LATEST

INTERVIEW WITH SEN. BERNIE SANDERS (I-VT.), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Bernie Sanders is expected to fare well Saturday evening in the Washington, Hawaii and Alaska contests, but are those enough for the delegate math to play out in his favor? Sanders joins moderator Chuck Todd to discuss his showings in those states as well as his policy positions in light of this week's terror attacks in Belgium.

"At the end of the day, we can not allow the Trumps of the world to use these incidents to attack all of the Muslim people in the world. That is unfair." - Sen. Sanders Tuesday on Jimmy Kimmel Live

###

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH GOV. JOHN KASICH (R-OHIO), PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Ohio Gov. John Kasich, who has recently drawn criticism from conservatives that he is hindering the party's efforts to stop Donald Trump, joins the show to discuss his campaign efforts and how he would have responded to Tuesday's attacks as president of the United States.

"If I'm the only one that can beat Hillary in the fall, why would anybody say I should leave? I mean that's just -- that's nuts!" - Gov. Kasich on CNN Monday

###

LATEST IN U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY & THE FIGHT AGAINST ISIS

In the wake of Tuesday's terrorist attacks in Brussels, NBC News' Keir Simmons updates the show from Brussels; national security expert Michael Leiter and NBC News' Richard Engel discuss how the brothers who attacked the subway and the airport were listed in U.S. terror databases as well as how numerous terror plots have been thwarted in the U.K., France, Belgium and Germany.

Richard Engel

Chief Foreign Correspondent, NBC News

Michael Leiter

EVP, Leidos; Former Director, U.S. National Counterterrorism Center

Keir Simmons

Correspondent, NBC News

"We have an entire focus on foreign fighters. In fact, a month ago, here in Belgium, we had a foreign fighter search team here working with the Belgians in order to try and make sure that they were dealing appropriately with this potential at any time in the future." - Sec. Kerry to Engel Friday

###

THE WEEK IN POLITICS

How did the week's political dialogue develop into a battle over wives after a terrorist attack? Is Texas Sen. Ted Cruz outmaneuvering Donald Trump in the delegate hunt? Will Sanders' expected wins in Alaska, Hawaii, and Washington tomorrow night even change the delegate math? The roundtable of NBC News correspondents discusses all of this and more from the week in politics.

Ben Ginsberg

Contributor, NBC News; Republican Strategist

Hallie Jackson

Correspondent, NBC News

Andrea Mitchell

Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, NBC News

Katy Tur

Correspondent, NBC News

Kristen Welker

White House Correspondent, NBC News

###

UPDATED: COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: APRIL 3, 2016

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Former Sec. Hillary Clinton

Presidential Candidate

###

Reince Priebus

Chairman, Republican National Committee

###

Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.)

Chairman, Committee on Homeland Security & Government Affairs

###

ROUNDTABLE

Charles Benson

Political Reporter, WTMJ-TV Milwaukee

David Brooks

Columnist, The New York Times

Helene Cooper

Pentagon Correspondent, The New York Times

Amy Walter

National Editor, The Cook Political Report

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: APRIL 10, 2016

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Presidential Candidate

—

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Paul Manafort

Convention Manager, Trump Campaign

—

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio

—

Glenn Beck

Founder, TheBlaze

—

ROUNDTABLE

Matt Bai

National Political Columnist, Yahoo! News

Molly Ball

National Political Reporter, The Atlantic

Rich Lowry

Editor, The National Review

Joy-Ann Reid

MSNBC Correspondent

UPDATED: COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: APRIL 17, 2016

George Clooney

Actor, Hillary Clinton Supporter

* * *

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Gov. Pat McCrory (R-NC)

* * *

Reince Priebus

Chair, Republican National Committee

* * *

Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL)

Chair, Democratic National Committee

* * *

Hugh Hewitt

Host, “The Hugh Hewitt Show”

Kathleen Parker

Columnist, The Washington Post

Perry Bacon

Senior Political Reporter, NBC News

Chris Matthews

Host, MSNBC's "Hardball"

UPDATED: COMING UP ON "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD": APRIL 24, 2016

New Pennsylvania Poll Numbers from NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist

—

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Presidential Candidate

—

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Fmr. Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.)

—

Katie Packer

Chair of Leading Anti-Trump Group, "Our Principles PAC"; Founder, Burning Glass Consulting

Michael Steele

Former Chair, Republican National Committee; MSNBC Political Analyst

ROUNDTABLE

Jose Diaz-Balart

Anchor, NBC News and MSNBC; Anchor, Telemundo's "Noticiero Telemundo" and "Enfoque"

Nicolle Wallace

Former White House Communications Director; NBC News Political Analyst

Robert Costa

National Political Reporter, The Washington Post

Joy-Ann Reid

MSNBC National Correspondent

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: SUNDAY, MAY 1, 2016

New Indiana Poll Numbers from NBC News/Wall Street Journal/Marist

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas)

Presidential Candidate

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

CIA Director John Brennan

5 Years After The Osama Bin Laden Raid

ROUNDTABLE

Ron Fournier

Senior Political Columnist, National Journal; Author, “Love That Boy”

Tom Friedman

Columnist, The New York Times

Doris Kearns Goodwin

American Biographer; Author, “Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream”

Kristen Welker

NBC News White House Correspondent

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: MAY 8, 2016

Donald Trump

Presidential Candidate

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.)

ROUNDTABLE

Matt Bai

National Political Columnist, Yahoo! News

Kellyanne Conway

Republican Strategist & Pollster

Eugene Robinson

Columnist, The Washington Post

Andrea Mitchell

Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, NBC News

MTP DID NOT AIR ON 15, 2016

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: SUNDAY, MAY 22, 2016

New National Poll Numbers from NBC News/Wall Street Journal

—

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Former Sec. Hillary Clinton

Presidential Candidate

—

Mark Cuban

Entrepreneur; Owner, Dallas Mavericks

—

ROUND TABLE

Helene Cooper

Pentagon Correspondent, The New York Times

Robert Draper

Correspondent, GQ; Contributor, The New York Times Magazine

Joy Reid

MSNBC Political Analyst, Host of “AM Joy”

Alex Castellanos

Republican Strategist; Co-Founder, Purple Strategies

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: MAY 29, 2016

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Presidential Candidate

—

Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R-Ca.)

—

ROUND TABLE

Kellyanne Conway

Republican Strategist & Pollster

Robert Costa

National Political Reporter, The Washington Post

Gerald Seib

Washington Bureau Chief, The Wall Street Journal

Neera Tanden

President, Center for American Progress

—

UPDATED: COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: JUNE 5, 2016

* * *

SPECIAL COVERAGE: REMEMBERING MUHAMMAD ALI

Bob Costas
NBC Sports

Bryant Gumbel
Host, HBO's "Real Sports"

* * *

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.)

* * *

Former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson
Presidential Nominee for the Libertarian Party

* * *

ROUND TABLE

Andrea Mitchell
Chief Foreign Affairs Correspondent, NBC News; Host, MSNBC's "Andrea Mitchell Reports"

Ron Fournier
Senior Political Columnist, National Journal

Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD)

Lanhee Chen
Fellow, The Hoover Institute; Former Advisor to Romney 2012 and Rubio 2016 Campaigns

* * *

COMING UP ON "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD": JUNE 12, 2016

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

Presidential Candidate

—

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.)

—

Steve Schmidt

MSNBC Contributor; Former Strategist, 2008 McCain Presidential Campaign

David Plouffe

Advisor, Uber; Former Strategist, 2008 Obama Presidential Campaign

—

Tom Brokaw

NBC News Special Correspondent

Hugh Hewitt

Host, "The Hugh Hewitt Show"

Joy Reid

MSNBC Political Analyst, Host of "AM Joy"

Amy Walter

National Editor, The Cook Political Report

June 12 MTP: SANDERS ON ORLANDO SHOOTING: "IT'S HORRIFIC, IT'S UNTHINKABLE"

ALSO: Sen. Bernie Sanders: "I will be meeting with Secretary Clinton on Tuesday evening"

PLUS: Ariz. Sen. Jeff Flake on the Orlando shooting: "Every one that happens is one too many"

JUNE 12, 2016 -- Presidential candidate **Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)** reacted this morning to the deadly Orlando shooting, telling moderator Chuck Todd, "It's horrific, it's unthinkable. And just hopes go out to all those who were shot that they can recover."

He continued: "We should not be selling automatic weapons which are designed to kill people. We have got to do everything that we can on top of that to make sure that guns do not fall into the hands of people who should not have them, criminals, people who are mentally ill."

Sen. Sanders also shared that he plans to meet with former Sec. Hillary Clinton this Tuesday evening to discuss her campaign because he wants "to get a sense of what kind of platform she will be supporting." Watch the full interview: <http://nbcnews.to/1WKoVGU>.

Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) also reacted to the Orlando shooting -- now the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history: "Obviously a horrible, horrible tragedy. And every one that happens is one too many."

He added: "If it is found out that this person was at least inspired by ISIS, then it'll probably be a terrorism debate. If he wasn't, it may be a gun debate." Watch the full interview: <http://nbcnews.to/1tkAnNa>.

Joining the show this morning for insight and analysis were NBC News' **Tom Brokaw**; radio talk show host **Hugh Hewitt**; MSNBC's **Joy Reid**; and The Cook Political Report's **Amy Walter**.

"We don't have any dialogue going on in America about all these mass shootings that have occurred since San Bernardino," Brokaw told Todd: <http://nbcnews.to/1tq4JOX>.

NOTE: "Meet the Press" did not air in some markets this morning due to NBC News special coverage.

###

MANDATORY CREDIT: NBC NEWS' "MEET THE PRESS"

- Mandatory credit to NBC News' "Meet the Press" on first reference.
- The onscreen "Meet the Press" credit must be clearly visible and unobstructed at all times in any image, video clip, or other form of media.
- Embedded web video must stream from the NBCNews.com media player with the unobstructed credit as described above.

###

Meet the Press - June 12, 2016

ANNOUNCER:

From NBC News in Washington, this is *Meet the Press* with Chuck Todd.

CHUCK TODD:

Good Sunday morning. There's a lot of political news, and we'll get to that in a few minutes. But first, there's breaking news out of Orlando, Florida, where overnight, a gunman opened fire in a gay nightclub. Police in Orlando say there are mass casualties, with as many as 20 people dead. We have this tragedy covered from all the angles. And I'm going to begin with my colleague Gabe Gutierrez who is on the scene right now in Orlando. And Gabe, bring us up to date.

GABE GUTIERREZ:

Chuck, good morning. This is still a very active scene. As you mentioned, police saying about 20 people are dead, at least 42 people were wounded and rushed to local hospitals. Within the past few minutes, we've seen witnesses bussed over to the Orlando Police Department as this investigation is just beginning.

Now, this all started around 2:00 a.m. local time at the Pulse Night Club, a popular gay dance club here in Orlando. And witnesses describe a chaotic scene. One witness said that he had to climb over bodies to escape. Other, more than a dozen people trapped in a bathroom, ducking for cover.

Now, this all happened around 2:00 a.m. Then after that, an officer arrived at the scene, an off-duty officer, and engaged with the suspect, who then retreated inside and took hostages. At around 5:00 a.m. local time, that's when authorities used an armored vehicle to plow into the nightclub and use an explosive device to distract the suspect who was killed in the gunfire.

Now the investigation is beginning into what exactly the motive was here. The suspect was found with an assault-style rifle, a handgun, and another type of unspecified device. Now, one officer was injured, but was saved by his kevlar helmet. Again, about 20 people are dead, police say, and at least 42 others were wounded, and authorities are investigating this as an act of terror. Back to you, Chuck.

CHUCK TODD:

Gabe Gutierrez on the ground in Orlando. Gabe, thanks very much. We've had some eye-witness accounts. I want to play a couple of them for you now. Two, one person who was in the club, and one a mother of somebody who was in the club. Here it is.

(BEGIN TAPE)

CHRISTOPHER HANSEN:

Well, you hear the "bang bang" and it sounded like a Ying Yang twins song and all I thought was just, "wow-- this is real." It sounds you know just like bass and then you turn around and you look and just people falling and screaming and just looking around, you see people laying there, and bloody, it's just like, do you help them or do you just go? And it's like, when you're hearing the bullets just go constantly, all you can do is think is right now is yourself.

FEMALE WITNESS:

I just feel terrible. I don't know where my son is. I haven't been able to get a hold of him. I know that he was sitting next to his boyfriend, and his boyfriend was taken by ambulance with multiple gunshots. And we can't get a hold of him.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Earlier this morning at one of the first news conferences giving some information to the public, here's what one officer said about the situation.

(BEGIN TAPE)

POLICE OFFICER DANNY BANKS:

Absolutely, we are investigating this from all party's perspective as an act of terrorism. Any time that we have potentially dozens of victims in any of our communities, then I think we can qualify that as terrorist activity.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Let me bring in Pete Williams, our chief justice correspondent. And Pete, already, if there's 20 dead, sadly this will already be one of the five worst, at least one of the five worst mass-casualty shootings in American history. What more can you tell us specifically on this terrorism angle?

PETE WILLIAMS:

I think it's safe to say that probably the number of dead is going to go up above 20 as they get further into this investigation. Really, our three sort of focuses right now is on the club itself. That'll be many days of forensic reconstruction of what happened. Secondly, the hospitals where the shooting victims were taken, they'll be interviewing them to get more information from the witnesses.

And third, and the most intense focus right now for the federal authorities is trying to figure out who this person is and what the ideology was. They have a good idea who it is. I'm told he's a U.S. citizen from Florida, not from Orlando. Early indications of some kind of connection or influence by international terrorism. The federal authorities have said so at the news conference, they said there certainly seem to be some indications of leanings that way.

But now the F.B.I. is trying to figure out, "Well, was this person in their database, no indication of that yet," but this is very early. What were the influences, they'll be looking at this person's emails, phone calls, who was he talking with, try to reconstruct the days that led up to this.

The authorities say it was obviously well prepared. And of course, you know that just from the fact that he was so well armed and also had some kind of suicide vest or some kind of explosive device with him. But whether this was targeted because it was just a place where a lot of people would be gathered at 2:00 in the morning in Orlando, there wouldn't be that many places like that, or whether it was targeted because it was a gay night club, they don't know the answer to that yet.

CHUCK TODD:

Now, the gunman is dead.

PETE WILLIAMS:

Yes.

CHUCK TODD:

There was a hostage situation which then, and they brought in a hostage negotiator. So they had some interaction with this gunman. So they must have a lot more information about perhaps some motivation that he might have said to them.

PETE WILLIAMS:

Unclear at this point. The people I've talked to don't know about that sort of information from the scene yet, which is still relatively chaotic. But there were basically two exchanges with police. The first one was at 2:00 a.m., perhaps at the door of the night club.

CHUCK TODD:

It seemed to be a club, right? A bodyguard type of, an off-duty cop?

PETE WILLIAMS:

Well, he was actually on duty, but was there. And they got the call at 2:00 a.m., they responded immediately. There was an initial exchange of gunfire. Then the gunman went into the club and took hostages. That continued for about three hours. And the police department was getting messages and phone calls from people hiding in bathrooms and other, this is a club with many rooms, saying, you know, "You've got to help us."

And that's when they decided to basically burst through the wall. But the interesting thing is that during that time, this was not a person who just kept shooting people. We don't know exactly when the people were wounded and killed. We don't know if that was at the beginning--

CHUCK TODD:

We don't know if that's the initial at two or whether, how the situation--

PETE WILLIAMS:

Right right right. But in other words, this person did not retreat into the club as our best understanding at this point and just keep shooting until there were no more people left to shoot.

CHUCK TODD:

And they're fairly convinced he acted alone, at least at this nightclub?

PETE WILLIAMS:

Yes. That's a good point. Because unfortunately, we've seen from some other terrorism incidents around the world, that when something like this happens, there'll be multiple locations. They say at this point, there's no indication of that, no indication that this person was acting with anyone else, preliminary information, but they've gone out of their way to say, "We think this was a one-off."

CHUCK TODD:

And there was just the day before, there was a shooting in Orlando, of an entertainer. No connection, they don't think?

PETE WILLIAMS:

That's their initial assessment, yes.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, obviously the panel with me now, Tom Brokaw, Hugh Hewitt, Amy Walter, Joy Reid. Tom, we don't know. Hate crime, terrorism, there's a number of directions this is going to go. And we know political reaction will be based on what the F.B.I. tells us. Should it matter?

TOM BROKAW:

No, it shouldn't.

CHUCK TODD:

It's a terrorizing situation no matter what.

TOM BROKAW:

No. It shouldn't matter. I mean, if it turns out to be connected to some kind of an international group, a lot of politicians will jump all over that and say, "We've got to do something about them." But let's say it's a domestic shooting. We've got to do something about that. You know, I'm a gun owner, I've been saying this for months now. It's time for people to come together and say, "Enough."

If he had an assault weapon, if it was an AR-14, Stan McChrystal has said not to be in civilian hands. It's designed to do one thing, to kill people. We don't have any dialogue going on in America about all these mass shootings that have occurred since San Bernardino. And they've been going on around the country, three or more killed at a time.

This absolutely belongs in the political debate and it ought to be a place where both parties can talk about it in a rational fashion to dial down. You've got a problem? Get a gun. That's what goes on now. It's got to come to an end. It's a terrible commentary.

CHUCK TODD:

Hugh, your initial thoughts and reaction.

HUGH HEWITT:

Well, the unmistakable mutterings of violence have been coursing through the world for years. And this looks like the Paris Concert Hall attack where a number of people are trapped. And I just finished Daniel Silva's new novel, *The Black Widow*, which is about domestic terrorism being imported by ISIS, and it's chilling. It's very chilling.

We focus on the San Jose violence, we focus on the violence in Chicago, San Bernardino, but ISIS wants to do this here. They want to do it here a lot. And so I found Pete's reporting remarkable that they're on this so fast. If you had electronic devices, they will figure out what the network is. But it's very chilling. And every dead person is a tragic murder. But if ISIS gets their people here or inspires, it will be a long series of years.

CHUCK TODD:

The arming of this too, right? That's just what this just gets everybody, and this is why you wonder, we can't have the holistic conversation.

AMY WALTER:

No.

CHUCK TODD:

Right? How do we prevent terrorists from arming themselves so well?

AMY WALTER:

You know, I just can't stop thinking about the mother that you showed.

CHUCK TODD:

That mom? Oh my gosh.

AMY WALTER:

You know, as a parent myself, and I think that this is where a lot of people, I said, and you do too, you talk to a lot of voters. I see it with a lot of women voters especially and they've been saying this really for the last three or four years. They do not make a distinction about domestic terrorism and international terrorism.

They are just as scared to send their kids on the school bus, as they are of this idea that ISIS is infiltrating us. And so I think it's getting to the heart of what is it that Americans are looking for, the sense of safety and security that right now, nobody can provide for them.

CHUCK TODD:

Joy, that's the overwhelming feeling I have, is that there is this just feeling of insecurity. We lack control on the terrorism issue. We seem to lack control and moral on the gun issue. We seem to lack cultural norms. I mean, there's just a part of this that just, like, it feels like a new normal, and it's an uncomfortable normal.

JOY-ANN REID:

It's a very uncomfortable normal. Because while Hugh says it looks like San Bernardino, it looks like Paris, it also looks like Charleston. Right? So we've had mass-casualty shootings, they were purely--

CHUCK TODD:

By the way, dead people are dead people. I hate to say, it all looks bad.

JOY-ANN REID:

It also looks like Newtown, right? So we have mass-casualty shootings that are affecting children, teachers, people in church, whether it's a hate crime or whether it's related to something, related to international terrorism, we're not getting to the core issue, which is how easy it is to get a gun. I mean, Florida happens to have the largest gun-owning population in the country and some of the most lax laws as to how you can get your hands on even an assault rifle.

So that if you mean to do harm, you know, we're talking about a state with nearly 1.4 million law-abiding, obviously, gun-owners. But we're not talking about that issue. Right now, the only debate that's taking place in the state of Florida is the Supreme Court weighing whether to allow complete open carry, so that people can actually visibly show firearms on the streets of Florida.

So we're having a debate that is so disconnected from the real fears that Amy talked about. The fears of people like me, who are afraid to have their kids out in the world, not just because of criminals, but also because of maybe a deranged person.

CHUCK TODD:

Regular people don't think of it the way we're just talking about it. Regular people see violence.

JOY-ANN REID:

Yup, that's right.

CHUCK TODD:

They see dead people in Orlando and it could've been anybody that they knew.

HUGH HEWITT:

It will be a very young casualty list, because it was a nightclub open at 3:00 a.m. It's going to be tragedy after tragedy. People vote their fear, they vote their children's futures. So it will impact them.

But what I'm talking about ISIS is we do focus on mass casualty at Mother Emanuel, I was doing one of these shows on Mother-- it's terrible. But ISIS would do this to a hundred million Americans if they could. That's what Joby Warrick at the *Post* stresses.

JOY-ANN REID:

But so would white nationalists. I mean, this is the problem is that people like Dylann Roof want to do the same thing. And he wrote a manifesto saying that people like him would too.

HUGH HEWITT:

Just capacity. ISIS has the capacity.

CHUCK TODD:

Pete, explain, the definition of when something is labeled terrorism versus not labeled terrorism, there is a reason that the definition, when the word gets used and when it doesn't. Explain this.

PETE WILLIAMS:

All right, well I have two ways to look at it. One is, it doesn't really matter to the law enforcement people. There is a very technical thing that if it's an act of domestic terrorism, or international terrorism, then it becomes the F.B.I.'s jurisdiction. They're responsible for investigating acts of terrorism. But beyond that very technical thing, it always seems to be a huge thing politically, but to law enforcement, it doesn't really matter that much.

And on Mr. Hewitt's point about ISIS, really, there are sort of two ways to think about ISIS. One is sending people to the U.S., Al Qaeda style, to carry out an attack. That's one model. Early indicators are that's not it. What ISIS has been more involved is trying to reach out, find people that are like-minded in the U.S., and embolden them and encourage them to carry out attacks here. Early indicators are that it's the latter, not the former.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, go ahead Tom.

TOM BROKAW:

Well I'm just going to say, you know, we're having this debate over terrorism or domestic. It doesn't make any difference. There are a lot dead people, dead people at the point of a gun, guns are really easy to get their hands on, and that's the debate that ought to be going on. As I said a moment ago, in America now it's taken for granted. You've got a problem? Go get a gun. Go take care of it with a gun.

I grew up with guns in the Midwest. We didn't have this kind of thing going on at that time. Everybody had sporting rifles and they were taught by their parents or others, and we didn't have mass shootings across America like we have now. They're routine.

CHUCK TODD:

Yeah. Well, a lot of people are going to say, does the coverage of these beget the-- I mean, there's all sorts of angles this debate we all know is going to take. I'm going to pause the conversation here. We will come back to this later in this show. But we're also going to focus a little bit on the presidential race with Republicans increasingly nervous about Donald Trump, that he may be blowing what is a winnable election.

I'll talk to Republican Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona, who's been sharply critical of Trump. And then there's Bernie Sanders, he'll be joining me and I'll ask him whether he's ready to endorse Hillary Clinton and whether he's still an active candidate for president. We'll be right back.

* * *COMMERCIAL BREAK***

CHUCK TODD:

Welcome back. It was quite a political week as well, to paraphrase a joke from the movie *Airplane*, Donald Trump picked a bad week to have a bad week. Just over a month ago, Trump seemed to be having his moment. Ted Cruz and John Kasich had dropped out. Hillary Clinton was facing weeks, if not months of fighting off Bernie Sanders. And even skeptical Republicans began thinking, "Hey, Trump could actually win this thing."

Fast forward to this week. Clinton wrapped up the nomination with four wins in six contests on Tuesday, including a much bigger win in California than anybody expected. Then there was the first polls post California, like this one from FOX, showing Clinton up three points, a six-point swing in less than a month. Is that a sign of things to come?

And then there were the endorsements from Senator Elizabeth Warren, from Vice President Biden, and of course, President Obama. Meanwhile, the Clinton bump coincided with a Trump slump, as the campaign remarkably became a referendum on Trump other than Clinton, the worst fears of many Washington Republicans. And this morning's *Washington Post* has a story of scathing criticism of Trump among Mitt Romney loyalists meeting in Utah this weekend, including references to Hitler and Mussolini. Trump himself hit back at Romney three times this weekend with comments like this one:

(BEGIN TAPE)

DONALD TRUMP:

Now I know why he lost, I mean, you talk about communication. So the guy was on yesterday, CNN. and I said to myself, "It's absolutely pathetic. He lost, he choked, like a dog he choked, and now it's time for somebody else. We're going to win folks, we're going to win. We're not going to be choking. I don't choke."

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

Trump says he can change, but can he? And does he want to? Joining me now, Republican Senator Jeff Flake of Arizona, who's been not shy about criticizing Donald Trump. Senator Flake, welcome back to the show.

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

Thanks for having me on.

CHUCK TODD:

Before I get to that, I want to start with the tragedy in Orlando. Obviously, we don't know yet the motivations. There's concern that there may be ideological motivation of the gunman. But we don't know those facts. No matter what, this is going to be one of the worst mass-casualty shootings in American history. I just want to get your initial reaction, Senator.

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

Well, we don't know what happened, but we reached out to federal offices. But obviously a horrible, horrible tragedy. And every one that happens is one too many. So we'll be looking at it as it unfolds in the coming days.

CHUCK TODD:

Senator, do you think it's possible to have a conversation, it seems as if when we-- when it gets determined what the motive is, we'll either have a gun-debate conversation in this country, not a debate, but a gun conversation, or we're going to have a terrorism conversation. We don't seem to be capable of doing both at the same time. Why is that?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

Well, it does seem to be the case. If it is found out that this person was at least inspired by ISIS, then it'll probably be a terrorism debate. If he wasn't, it may be a gun debate. But you're right, it seems to be one or the other.

CHUCK TODD:

But can't we have both? I mean, can't we talk about both? Aren't they in some ways interrelated? We want to make it harder for terrorists to attack us any way possible.

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

You bet. And I think we can. A lot of us have been talking for quite a while in terms of background checks and tightening background checks, particularly as it pertains to those with mental illness. And I think that that debate can and should go on as well as the debate on how to best protect us against those who were inspired or funded or directed by international terrorists.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, Senator. Let me turn to politics here a little bit. The last time you were on this show, you made it clear that you weren't ready to support him, but you were willing to give him some time to prove to you why you should support him. The thing that bothered you the most is the Muslim ban at the time.

It's about a month later. You've seen what happened even in the last 36 hours, the back and forth again with Mitt Romney and Donald Trump. Are you yet comfortable supporting Donald Trump and can you ever envision being comfortable supporting Donald Trump?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

I'm not comfortable now and it is more difficult for me to imagine that I'll be comfortable coming up. We've had, since we last spoke, certainly the comment on the judge, born in Indiana, who Donald Trump referred to as a Mexican judge. It's extremely troubling, and it makes all of us wonder if he can turn around, if he can actually act like a candidate needs to act to win a general election.

CHUCK TODD:

He hasn't apologized for it. Do you believe, by the way, it was a racist statement?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

I agree with Paul Ryan's definition. I don't know how else you can characterize it other than saying that it's textbook racism. Now I just don't know how else you can define it.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you believe there should be an effort, there is more than a month before the convention, that there is one last effort for delegates to decide whether this is the right path to take with Donald Trump?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

I doubt that that will gain any speed or currency. It's pretty much too late at this point--

CHUCK TODD:

Should it though?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

--to envision another candidate. If these comments continue, or if Donald Trump still refuses to apologize or to acknowledge that there's a problem with these kind of statements, then yes, I think there should be. But I'm not holding my breath.

CHUCK TODD:

Take me in that room earlier this week. It certainly seems to me, because I can just tell from Mitch McConnell's comments, they got tougher on Trump as the week went on. I take it many of your colleagues in the Senate Republican Conference, not just a handful, are very frustrated by Donald Trump.

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

Oh, we are. This will affect the down-ballot races in the Senate and the House and everywhere. It really has an impact. I read in 2012 there were some other Senate candidates making statements that we didn't agree with. And that affected our races. I can't imagine how it would be to have the top of the ticket, our standard bearer, our nominee making these kind of statements. And so it's very troubling to those of us who are down ballot. I'm grateful that I'm not running this year.

CHUCK TODD:

Your colleague Senator John McCain is the one up in your state. Let me ask you this. Is it more likely you could see yourself voting for Hillary Clinton or Gary Johnson, the libertarian candidate?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

I certainly won't be voting for Hillary Clinton. But like I said, it's difficult to envision now, unless Mr. Trump is a different kind of candidate than he has been so far, to vote for Donald Trump.

CHUCK TODD:

He's about to turn 70. Do you expect him to change?

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

It's becoming more difficult to see, I have to say. At that point in life, frankly after age 30 it's tougher to change, I think, for all of us. But hope springs eternal. We do have significant time between now and November. And I hope that he changes as a candidate. I really do.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, Senator Flake, thanks for coming on. It's a tragic morning. I appreciate you spending a little time with us.

SEN. JEFF FLAKE:

Thank you.

CHUCK TODD:

Well, as we said, we'll keep talking a little bit on politics. Elizabeth Warren endorsed Hillary Clinton this week, so did Vice President Biden, so did President Obama. The question is, is Bernie Sanders ready to unify the party?

(BEGIN TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

And joining me now is Senator Bernie Sanders. He joins me from Vermont. Senator, welcome back to *Meet the Press*.

BERNIE SANDERS:

My pleasure.

CHUCK TODD:

Before we get into political questions, obviously what's unfolding in Orlando is on top of mind for many viewers. We don't know the motivation. We just know there's a lot of dead people right now, a lot of injured people. Whether it's gun related, terrorism related, hate-crime related, it's a massive shooting. Your reaction?

BERNIE SANDERS:

Oh, it's horrific, it's unthinkable. And just hopes go out to all those who were shot that they can recover. And I've got to tell you, 25 years ago, I believe that in this country, we should not be selling automatic weapons which are designed to kill people. We have got to do everything that we can on top of that to make sure that guns do not fall into the hands of people who should not have them, criminals, people who are mentally ill. So that struggles continues.

CHUCK TODD:

Do you think we can ever have a conversation where we have the terrorism conversation and a gun conversation where everybody can sit down and have this without trying to politicize one version of events over the other?

BERNIE SANDERS:

I do, Chuck. Because I think that there is a very broad consensus in this country, not 100 percent of the people, overwhelming majority of gun owners and non-gun owners understand that we have got to do everything that we can to prevent guns from falling into the hands of people who should not have them.

That means expanding the instant background check, it means doing away with the gun show loophole, it means addressing the straw man provision. I think there is a wide consensus to move forward in that direction.

CHUCK TODD:

Alright, let me move to a couple political questions before I let you go. Are you still an active candidate for president?

BERNIE SANDERS:

Well, let me just say this, I am doing everything that I can and will continue to do everything that I can to make sure that Donald Trump does not become president of the United States. I think this man in a dozen different ways is not fit to become president. I think the idea that he is running on a campaign based on bigotry, insulting Mexicans, Muslims, and women, it's hard to believe that that is really happening in the year 2016. So I'm going to do everything that I can to make sure that he is not elected president of the United States. I will be meeting with Secretary Clinton on Tuesday evening, I believe. And we will be chatting about her campaign. And I simply want to get a sense of what kind of platform she will be supporting, whether she will be vigorous in standing up for working families in the middle class, moving aggressively in climate change, healthcare for all, making public colleges and universities tuition-free. And after we have that kind of discussion and after we can determine whether or not we are going to have a strong and progressive platform, I will be able to make other decisions.

CHUCK TODD:

I was just going to say, that doesn't sound like you are an active candidate. It sounds like you're winding down your campaign, you're just trying to decide how comfortable you're going to be in supporting Hillary Clinton. Is that a fair assessment?

BERNIE SANDERS:

Well, well, no. What's fair is that what our campaign has always been about are addressing the many crises facing this country. And there are millions of people who want bold change in this country. And what we have got to determine between now and the Democratic Convention, and by the way Chuck, we're going to have well over 1,900 delegates at that convention, is what kind of platform and what kind of agenda there will be if Secretary Clinton gets elected, if she wins the election. And I have got to make sure that working with all kinds of people throughout this country, we are going to have an agenda that stands up to Wall Street, that is aggressive on the issues that people who supported me feel strongly about.

CHUCK TODD:

What matters more to you though? A platform that's progressive leaning, that you're comfortable with, or a running mate that she picks that doubles down on progressive politics? What would be more of the important commitment to you from Hillary Clinton? Supporting that platform or a progressive running mate?

BERNIE SANDERS:

It's not either/or. It is both and everything else. Look, politics is not a game. There are 47 million people living in poverty, 28 million people who have no health insurance, 40,000 people a year who die because they don't get to the doctor when they should. Millions of people struggling with student debt, climate change is a threat to the whole planet. These are real issues.

And what I have got to see and want to see is the Democrats come up not only with the progressive platform, but with an agenda and with the leadership that will transform this country, stand up to the big-money interest, and address the many, many serious problems we face.

CHUCK TODD:

Alright, Senator Bernie Sanders, I appreciate you joining me. It's a tough morning for a lot of Americans watching what's happening in Orlando. Thanks for taking a few minutes with us.

BERNIE SANDERS:

Thank you.

CHUCK TODD:

When we come back, our new feature on *Meet the Press*, what we'll be doing until November, the War Room. I'll talk to two top campaign managers who have run presidential campaigns, one for President Obama, the other for John McCain. They're going to take us through the battleground maps. And later, Tom Brokaw with David Letterman on life after *The Late Show*, IndyCar racing, and yes, politics.

(BEGIN TAPE)

DAVID LETTERMAN:

You hear, "The great thing about America is anybody can grow up to be president." Oh jeez, I guess that might be true.

(END TAPE)

COMMERCIAL BREAK

CHUCK TODD:

And we are back. Hillary Clinton isn't just pulling ahead in the polls, her campaign organization seems far ahead of Trump's, as well. In fact, let's take a look at the numbers. First, staff. There are a little over 700 paid staffers on the Clinton campaign and there are about 70, on the Trump campaign, 7-0.

Trump's team concedes it will rely heavily on the RNC's staff. Another major metric to use: Money. Clinton has raised \$211 million so far in this cycle. Trump, he's raised about \$59 million. And then there are the battleground states. The Clinton campaign says they have a state director in each of the core 10 states that we are watching closely and these are the states that both campaigns concede are in the battle-ground.

Trump's situation is a little more murky in these core 10, but we've confirmed there are Trump state directors in at least five and the RNC has directors in all of them. So what does all this mean? We're introducing a new segment for the general election. We're calling it: the War Room -- bit cliché, yes -- where we're going to bring in campaign professions to game out this election for you and for us. And we have two of the most well-known ones in America today.

David Plouffe was the architect of President Obama's 2008 campaign. And Steve Schmidt ran Senator John McCain's 2008 operation right up against Plouffe. Well, both of them join me now.

David, I want to start with you. We did a little comparison of 2008 Obama and 2016 Hillary Clinton. And it seems on staff, money raised, metrics that you guys had more staff in 2008 than Hillary Clinton does at this time, but everything else is about even. How do you assess things?

DAVID PLOUFFE:

Well, I think that even though they've been dealing with the end of the primary, they have been preparing for the general election. So you know, Trump doesn't really believe in campaigns. I mean, he sort of believes sort of crazy racist rants on Twitter is the campaign.

And that message and candidate strength and timing all are more important than campaign mechanics. But to win battleground states in a close election, this may not be that. What the Clinton campaign is doing here, which is putting state directors on the ground. I'm sure they'll add hundreds of organizers over the next few weeks. You know we got to, by the end of June in '08, we were 2500 staff. Most of those being field organizers who were out registering voters. And they've got a big data department. Which, you know, organizing doesn't make much sense or even spending money on ads doesn't make much sense unless you have great sophistication about who you're trying to reach and what will motivate them.

And so, the disparity between the two campaigns, I don't think we've ever seen anything like it in American politics. This kind of disparity between the actually disciplined, data-driven ground campaign you need to win a modern Presidential campaign.

CHUCK TODD:

Steve, we did the same thing, we sort of compared McCain '08 at this time to Trump where he is now and I want to stipulate something that you reminded me of, is that you guys were a campaign that basically went bankrupt once during the primaries and had to restart. You were brought in to help restart it. You had to start from scratch, essentially, midway through. And yet, when you compare the two, McCain '08 had raised more money by this time. So assess what you see right now with Trump.

STEVE SCHMIDT:

Well, there's two finite commodities in American presidential politics, Chuck: one is time, the other is money. Donald Trump has been the presumptive Republican nominee for some time now and he hasn't made very much good use of it. You look at the controversies along his racist attacks on Judge Curiel, you look at the divisions in the party, you look at the condemnations coming from senior Republicans.

You look at the fact that the campaign is not raising money. And in fact, but for the RNC, the Trump campaign would not have a field operation, it would not have a data operation. It would have no ability to project political strength into any of these states, but for Donald Trump tweeting or but for Donald Trump being physically there in a rally setting. So by every objective measurement of a winning campaign in a Presidential election cycle, the Trump campaign has opted out of all of them.

And this should be concerning for Republicans because if you look at just the states Democrats have won in six out of the last six elections, they start off speaking of walls with a fairly impenetrable blue wall with 242 electoral votes and you go to the five out of six states that they've won, that number goes to 282 electoral votes, with 12 more necessary to win.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, let's talk about the battle-ground map. We've got various ones. We've got the core ten I talked about and then you've got the reaches that both campaigns are making noise about. So David, let me start with you, you have the core ten, but you have chatter among Democrats about targeting in Arizona,

targeting a Georgia, maybe even targeting Indiana and Missouri. So my question to you is, do you do that? When do you do that?

DAVID PLOUFFE:

It's a great question. So obviously, if Hillary Clinton wins Arizona, Georgia, Missouri, Indiana, those are not going to be the ones that put her over 270, those are the ones that are going to put her into the high 300s, if over 400. So, but you're going to look at that carefully, because obviously if you extend the map, you make Trump and the Republicans play defense.

And so, that question really comes down to first an assessment of whether you can win, and that's not based on head-to-head polling, that's based on really smart data and modeling. So you basically look at a bunch of different scenarios and can you get to 50 percent? And if so, what does it require? And do you have the time, money and organization to do it?

But Trump has provided a lot of energy on the ground for the Democratic Party. I think Hillary Clinton has to provide more passion on her own candidacy. But if those two things happen, you can register the types of voters you need to win states like that.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, Steve Schmidt, you have a candidate in Donald Trump that desperately wants to target New York and California, that's why he spent so much time there last week in California and it's why he's hired a separate pollster apparently just to focus on New York.

And the RNC, over the weekend, in their battleground state door knocking, included New York and California because the nominee insisted. When do you pull the plug on something like that?

STEVE SCHMIDT:

Preferably, it never would have been targeted in the first place, but barring that, you would pull the plug on it tomorrow, ideally. This is folly. Republicans have no chance in 2016 of winning the State of California or winning the State of New York. Remarkably, you look at California, there was just a Senate primary where the Republican Party has collapsed to such a degree, the two runoff candidates in the general election are both Democrats.

So when you look at this map right now, you have to look at two things: First, the structural advantage we talked about earlier for Democrats, but secondly, what you have to look at is the fact that, you know, for Donald Trump there are many fewer ways for him to win than there are for Hillary Clinton.

CHUCK TODD:

David Plouffe, of the states that have been going blue and trending that way over the last six cycles, but even the last two, what are you the most concerned about?

DAVID PLOUFFE:

Well, I think Colorado and Virginia were both great states of Barack Obama. The so-called "Obama Coalition," which is not a Democratic coalition, it's got to be recreated I think. But again, let's look at the electoral college, if Barack Obama, if Hillary Clinton loses Virginia, Florida and Ohio and wins everything else Obama won, she's still the President at 272 electoral votes. So that's the steep climb. But I think

Colorado and Virginia were really uniquely suited to Barack Obama, so I think Hillary Clinton's campaign is going to have to be really smart.

CHUCK TODD:

And Steve Schmidt, what do you make of the Gary Johnson factor and what does that mean positive and negative for Trump?

STEVE SCHMIDT:

We're going to be talking a lot more about Gary Johnson as this campaign goes forward. I think the Libertarian ticket has the opportunity to get north of 10 percent of the vote, it could be a repository or protest vote for Republicans all across the country who can't bring themselves to vote for either Mr. Trump or Secretary Clinton.

CHUCK TODD:

And that puts more states in play, if he does that.

STEVE SCHMIDT:

It puts more states in play. And when you get into a candidacy, a third party candidacy that's north of 10%, that opens up a lot of different routes and a lot of different states for the other two candidates.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, David--

STEVE SCHMIDT:

But that candidacy will favor Secretary Clinton, not Donald Trump.

CHUCK TODD:

David Plouffe, Steve Schmidt, always a pleasure, guys, thanks.

DAVID PLOUFFE:

Thanks, Chuck.

STEVE SCHMIDT:

Good to be with you, Chuck.

CHUCK TODD:

We'll be back in a moment with President Obama, about to hit the campaign trail. How much help will he be providing Hillary Clinton?

COMMERCIAL BREAK.

CHUCK TODD:

President Obama says he's eager to get on the campaign trail. Well, there's good reason to believe Hillary Clinton will want him there. Mr. Obama's approval rating right now stands at 51 percent. How significant is that? Well, consider this, in 1988 that's right where President Ronald Reagan was, 51 percent. His popularity at the time helped his vice president, George H. W. Bush, to win 40 states and defeat Michael Dukakis.

By the way, George W. Bush's approval rating in 2008 sat at roughly 28 percent in June of that year. Which may have helped doom Republican John McCain before his general election even started. When we come back, could Hillary Clinton end up deciding to go with an all-woman ticket and pick Elizabeth Warren as her running mate? How real is it? We'll discuss it right after this.

COMMERCIAL BREAK

CHUCK TODD:

Back now with the panel. Let me formally introduce them, Tom Brokaw of course of NBC News, my colleague Joy-Ann Reid at MSNBC has *A.M. Joy* these days on weekends, Amy Walter, editor of *The Cook Political Report*, and Hugh Hewitt, a host of course on the Salem Radio Network. I have a little bit of an update of course on the shooting and what happened in Orlando.

NBC News can now name the shooter. His name is Omar Mateen. He was born in New York in 1986. Currently had resided in Port Saint Lucie, Florida. Not surprisingly, both presumptive nominees have reacted to the shooting this morning. Let me put up both tweets. Donald Trump, "Really bad shooting in Orlando, police investigating possible terrorism, many people dead and wounded."

Hillary Clinton's tweet, "Woke up to hear the devastating news from Florida as we wait for more information, my thoughts are with those affected by this horrific act." I made the mistake of looking at Twitter already. And you won't be surprised, Hugh Hewitt, that literally you have two different conversations going on. Conservative Twitter, all about terrorism. And in fact, lamenting that it isn't the only thing we're talking about. And on the left, concern about this is the worst hate crime perhaps in gay America's history and the issue of guns.

HUGH HEWITT:

Well, I'm not surprised, it divided as you anticipated. It is possible to have the conversation and involve both. I will say that the context--

CHUCK TODD:

Let me know where that conversation takes place.

HUGH HEWITT:

It's right here, it's right here.

CHUCK TODD:

I agree, I think we're trying to do it here.

HUGH HEWITT:

And I appreciate that. And I appreciate as well that people on the right want to make sure that Donald Trump gave a very strong speech at the Faith and Freedom Forum on Friday in which he challenged Hillary Clinton to use the words "radical Islam," ever, to talk about it. If this turns out to have been inspired by ISIS, it will fulfill Donald Trump's prediction of the problem with her candidacy, which is it's not serious about terrorism.

Egypt, Libya, Syria, her whole record is a disaster. The server is a disqualifier. So it's going to frame this. It's also going to frame his choice, which is imminent, of his vice president. And I think it strengthens the case for Chris Christie and Tom Cotton. It will also probably, this event will end, it was already over, the talk of an open convention, which I participated in. It would take Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan and the written permission of the NFL and Major League Baseball to get the open convention now.

CHUCK TODD:

You know, it's interesting Joy, what Hugh just said about what this, stories like this do have a way of they shut down whatever we were talking about before. And obviously, it was all about Trump and the fracturing that was going on in the G.O.P. and then it starts a new conversation. But of course, that conversation doesn't last very long.

JOY-ANN REID:

Right. Yeah, and I think that that's the frustration of a lot of people, particularly on the left have with the whole conversation about guns and whether or not you're talking about people who were inspired by ISIS or people who were domestic. We never actually get to how easy it is for either of those groups to acquire the kind of firepower, military-style hardware to do so much damage and inflict so much harm on fellow Americans.

So I think at the core, unless we can have a rational conversation about guns, the rest of it, yes, it polarizes the country. People on the right want to stick with the conversation about terrorism, people on the left want to talk about hate crimes. And I think I have also seen on liberal Twitter that we're underplaying the fact that this is a horrific crime.

CHUCK TODD:

On Gay America

JOY-ANN REID:

Committed against gay Americans. But at the end of the day, whoever wants to do this kind of carnal damage to their fellow man, they can easily do it with the kind of weaponry that is used in war. And we have to, at some point, be able to talk about that.

CHUCK TODD:

Tom, it was interesting, by the way, in the two tweets. First of all, that was a more reserved version of Trump than previous ones. He went immediately, he'd go immediately to a conclusion. He didn't do that here. He actually was right in-line with what he had heard with reports. Hillary Clinton actually more reserved than him.

TOM BROKAW:

Well, we don't know. But I think Hugh is absolutely right. I think that we could have had in the past, in the past several months, a more emphatic statement from Hillary Clinton about the danger that ISIS presents.

I have said from the beginning, this is going to help define the Obama presidency, as he's going to leave office, that war is still underway. It is a terrible war.

And on the other side, Donald Trump can bomb them all, he can bomb them back to hell, they'll still be there. The fact is that they'll be able to unleash people in this country if they choose to do that. It's asymmetrical warfare. They've got a big network around their country and around the world. We've seen that in Europe already. And so we have to have a new way of dealing with that as well, and the gun access is a part of it.

But the larger role here, is about what do we do about the destabilized Middle East and the very radical part of Islam that does exist and is waging war not just there, but now in Central Africa and moving in, by the way, into Central Asia. And the Russians are very concerned about it.

CHUCK TODD:

It is. And Amy, you know, I go back to it just doesn't feel like we have this holistic conversation, that it is destabilizing. It is, you're sitting here and you're going, "Can I go in a public place?" And now I want to go back to something Joy just brought up. I can't think of a worst act of hate against gay America in American history.

AMY WALTER:

Right. And we don't know again what his motivation, what's going to drive all of this. But so much of the discussion, especially when we're talking about guns, it's not the message as much as the messenger. And when the messengers are either liberal or Democrat, instantly Republicans or people who are Republican--

CHUCK TODD:

They just hear--

AMY WALTER:

--they just shut down. And unless or until you have prominent Republicans coming out and making these comments, this discussion is never going to change, because it's still going to be red and blue, and it's not about what physically happened, it's about the fear as well that these guys, I don't trust them to do it properly.

CHUCK TODD:

No, I want to, just one final out question on here for all of you, which is when the conversation turned into a security conversation during the primaries, Donald Trump benefited.

AMY WALTER:

Right.

CHUCK TODD:

And that's something that Hillary Clinton has to be concerned about, right? Tom, Joy?

TOM BROKAW:

Well, what I do think is that we need to know a lot more about what motivated him. We need to know a lot more about what motivated--

CHUCK TODD:

The public reacts in an insecure way.

TOM BROKAW:

And the DNA of this guy and what they're going to tell us about it. But you're right, it puts it right back on the agenda again, big time. And it's something that people will respond to in the most visceral possible fashion.

JOY-ANN REID:

Except that the solutions that Donald Trump has put forward, as simplistic as they are, involve things like banning all Muslims from the United States. Which of course, just increases our exposure to terrorism, because it increases the paranoia about the United States outside this country.

CHUCK TODD:

Hugh, you had speculated before the show started that maybe Donald Trump should rethink when he does his planned Clinton hit speech.

HUGH HEWITT:

Yes, I believe that--

CHUCK TODD:

You don't think he should do it now tomorrow.

HUGH HEWITT:

No, wait a couple days. He needs to talk about Rajiv Fernando who's the International Security Advisory Board, a point he found Mrs. Clinton, that was so wholly unqualified. He needs to talk about *the Wall Street Journal* story, on the drone attacks that were on his server. He needs to talk about Laureate University

But now he needs to talk about again what he said on Friday in that very strong speech, we have to deal with radical Islam. So it needs to be reworked. And the rush to make that speech, slow down, focus, and execute.

CHUCK TODD:

Well, there's a lot of Republicans that want him to slow down, focus, before he executes. We'll see if he takes your advice. We'll be back in 45 seconds with our Endgame segment. We've got a little treat for you, a preview of Tom's interview with David Letterman, if you can recognize him. We'll be right back.

COMMERCIAL BREAK.

CHUCK TODD:

Back now with our Endgame segment. You know, I had teased earlier that we were going to talk about the idea of Elizabeth Warren. Anybody take Elizabeth Warren on the short list seriously at this table, Joy I'll start with you--

JOY-ANN REID:

I do.

CHUCK TODD:

You do?

JOY-ANN REID:

I do. Because I think Harry Reid changing his mind on it, because he is such a sort of important strategist for Democrats, and the fact that they're actually gaming out the scenario whereby she could vacate her seat, take a long time to do it, get in there, I actually think because Democrats assume already they're going to lose white men, that the idea of trying to even out that gender gap with white women, it's still, I think is a viable idea for Democrats--

CHUCK TODD:

Tom, you shook your head the entire time.

TOM BROKAW:

Nice try, Joy. No way. I mean, this is the best head fake I've seen in a long time. We want to keep the Bernie Sanders crowd and the Elizabeth Warren crowd with us, but do you want to try to manage Elizabeth Warren as the number two on your ticket? And they don't, frankly, they need other people besides Elizabeth Warren. Frankly, they need to play to the middle.

AMY WALTERS:

If they're having problems with Bernie supporters in September, they've got bigger problems than anything else. So I would argue she is best as a surrogate. You don't need her on your ticket to be making that appeal and punching back at Donald Trump every single day.

CHUCK TODD:

As a Republican, do you wish for Warren on the ticket? Or what happens if she takes Mike Mullen, the idea that I keep hearing?

HUGH HEWITT:

The Massachusetts elect that I'm worried about is Seth Moulton, combat marine, young, dynamic, extraordinarily talented Democrat who would reinvigorate the Jackson wing of the party. I worry about him. Elizabeth Warren, please God.

CHUCK TODD:

All right. I would be shocked if it's that. I'm with Tom here. It's a massive head fake. Before we go, Tom, you had an interesting sit-down with David Letterman. And obviously, he must miss, he says he doesn't,

but you've got to think he misses being able to do a little stand up here. Here was his assessment of Donald Trump.

(BEGIN TAPE)

DAVID LETTERMAN:

I understand that he's repugnant to people. I understand that he says things that are insulting and hurtful and reviling. I understand all of that. I don't know whether he's serious, I don't know what his problem is, I don't know if there's pathology there, I don't know any of that. But you tell me the men putting together the constitution, witnessing this election, wouldn't they have just said, "Yeah, it's part of the way we set it up. Good luck."

TOM BROKAW:

I think you're absolutely right. He didn't cheat by--

DAVID LETTERMAN:

Right, there's nothing illegal going on, it's just, he's despicable. And in this very school, and everybody's school, you hear, "The great thing about America is anybody can grow up to be president." Oh jeez, I guess that might be true.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

You can see more from Tom's interview with-- and that was not a homeless man somewhere who had stopped shaving. That was David Letterman. You can see that on assignment tonight at 7:00 Eastern, 6:00 Central on NBC. Tom, you know, there's some fascinating Letterman interviews with Donald Trump from the '80s. He used to be a regular on late night back when I was obsessed with the show.

TOM BROKAW:

He was there a lot. And David is a very keen observer of American politics. I mean, he's obviously left of center, but he loved having Donald on, because he could light things up. And he really is at ease with himself right now. He's as happy as I've ever seen him. He said energy kind of went out of him when Stephen Colbert took over his show. He thought he would miss it, he devoted most of his life to it, now it's all about his son Harry and having a good time.

CHUCK TODD:

Hugh, I want to transition here. We just found out this morning, George Voinovich, you're an Ohio native, long-time governor, the last Republican mayor of Cleveland, he passed away. Give me a few, your first, fondest memories--

HUGH HEWITT:

Two-term senator, two-term governor. But it's his mayoralship in Cleveland, in the 1980s, when he turned the city around and then, you know, we're playing at Quicken Arena with the Cavs, the Indians are a Progressive Field. He got it started in the '80s. He cleared land. George Voinovich rebirthed Cleveland and he will be greatly missed. Even though conservatives remember the Bolton thing, he'll be missed.

CHUCK TODD:

Focus on that. Thank you, Hugh. That's all we have for today. Obviously an incredibly busy Sunday. We'll be back next week because if it's Sunday, it's *Meet the Press*.

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *

COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: JUNE 19, 2016

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

House Speaker Paul Ryan

Attorney General Loretta Lynch

ROUNDTABLE

José Díaz-Balart

Anchor, NBC News and MSNBC; Anchor, Telemundo's “Noticiero Telemundo” and “Enfoque”

Mark Halperin

Managing Editor, Bloomberg Politics; Contributor, MSNBC

Gwen Ifill

Moderator & Managing Editor, PBS “Washington Week”; Co-anchor & Managing Editor, PBS “NewsHour”

Katy Tur

Foreign Correspondent, NBC News

UPDATED: COMING UP ON “MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD”: JUNE 26, 2016

* * *

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA)

* * *

SUNDAY EXCLUSIVE

Paul Manafort

Senior Advisor, Trump Campaign

* * *

David Miliband

President & CEO, The International Rescue Committee; Former British Foreign Secretary

* * *

ROUNDTABLE

Doris Kearns Goodwin

Presidential Historian; Author, "Lyndon Johnson and the American Dream"

Kimberley Strassel

Columnist, *The Wall Street Journal*

Helene Cooper

Pentagon Correspondent, *The New York Times*

Chris Cillizza

Political Reporter, *The Washington Post*