

## 2018 3RD 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.

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**MTP EXCLUSIVE: 'NOBODY SHOULD BE SURPRISED,' SAYS GRAHAM ON INCREASED NUCLEAR PRODUCTION FROM NORTH KOREA, FIRST REPORTED BY NBC NEWS FRIDAY**

***PLUS: Sen. Graham (R-S.C.): Roe v. Wade "Has Been Affirmed Over the Years"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Sen. Cantwell (D-Wash.) "Would Love" a Delayed Vote on Supreme Court Justice***

***EXCLUSIVE: Ocasio-Cortez: "There are a Lot of Districts in This Country That are New York-14, That Have Changed a Lot in the Last 20 Years and Whose Representation Has Not"***

**JULY 1, 2018** – In an exclusive interview that aired this morning on "Meet the Press," **Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.)** reacts to [NBC News' exclusive reporting](#) Friday that, according to U.S. officials, North Korea has increased nuclear production at secret sites, telling moderator Chuck Todd, "Nobody should be surprised. ... It's now a time to bring their program to an end one way or the other."

On the issue of abortion at the Supreme Court justice confirmation hearing, the South Carolina senator says, "You don't overturn precedent unless there's a good reason." "I would tell my pro-life friends, you can be pro-life and conservative, but you can also believe in stare decisis," continues Graham. "Roe v. Wade, in many different ways, has been affirmed over the years."

Graham also addressed Thursday's House Judiciary Committee hearing with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and FBI Director Christopher Wray, sharing that he trusts Rosenstein but has "problems with the way he's interacted with Congress, adding, "I don't have any reason to ask him to be removed. I want Mueller to do his job." [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.)** tells Todd in an exclusive interview this morning that she “would love” a delayed vote on the Supreme Court nominee to “make sure we have enough time.” Cantwell advises her fellow Democratic senators: “If they vote for somebody who’s going to change precedent, it could be a career-ending move.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**, the new Democratic nominee for New York’s 14th congressional district, also joins the broadcast in an exclusive interview this morning, telling Todd that her win is representative of “a lot of districts in this country... that have changed a lot in the last 20 years and whose representation has not.” When asked what she would have said to Rep. Joe Crowley (D-N.Y.) had he reached out to her on how to win her vote as a constituent, prior to her deciding to run, Ocasio-Cortez replies, “The problem is that that never happened.” She also addressed embracing the label of “democratic socialist”: “The definition of democratic socialism to me, again, is the fact that in a modern, moral and wealthy society, no American should be too poor to live.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

The Boston Herald’s **Kimberly Atkins**, Democratic strategist **Cornell Belcher**, CBN News’ **David Brody** and NBC News’ **Hallie Jackson** join this morning’s roundtable to discuss the week in politics, including the new Supreme Court justice opening with the news of Justice Kennedy’s retirement. On the president using Roe v. Wade as a litmus test, [Jackson shares](#), “One way that I have heard that people close to the president are trying to inoculate against him of that is to push him toward picking a woman.”

[Read the full transcript of “Meet the Press”](#) this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**MTP EXCLUSIVE: SEN. BLUNT: SENATE ‘CAN CONFIRM ANY OF FOUR NAMES BEING MENTIONED’ FOR SCOTUS, ‘I HOPE’ TRUMP LISTENS TO TEAM ON NORTH KOREA & RUSSIA**

***PLUS: Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) on North Korea: “It Was a Mistake to Give the Military Exercises Up”***

***EXCLUSIVE: Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.): McConnell “Trying to Play to His Political Advantage” on Senate Supreme Court Confirmation Rules***

***ALSO: Trump Lawyer Rudy Giuliani Says Trump Sitting Down with Putin is “a Sign of How Confident the President is That He Did Nothing Wrong”***

**JULY 8, 2018** – In an exclusive interview, **Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)** previews the confirmation battle over President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, telling moderator Chuck Todd that the

Senate “can confirm any of the four names being mentioned,” adding, “the president has to think about who is the easiest to get confirmed here.”

Ahead of the president’s summit with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Blunt says, “It’s fine to talk to the Russians, but the president should clearly understand that neither the Russians nor dictators like Kim Jong-un are going to be charmed by anybody.”

“He’s genuinely optimistic about anything he is involved in at the time,” shares Blunt when asked by Todd if Trump’s remarks hours after meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un are “the naiveté of a first-term president.” “It was a mistake to give the military exercises up,” asserts the Missouri senator.

Todd questions if the president listens to his team for the North Korea and Russia summits, and Blunt replies, “I hope so. ... He’s comfortable with the team he’s put around himself for the first time in his presidency, and hopefully that will show up in these talks.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

“One Republican senator can decide the fate of any Supreme Court nominee,” shares **Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)** in an exclusive interview this morning. The Illinois senator calls the Supreme Court confirmation hearing rules of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) “totally inconsistent”: “He’s either wrong the first time or wrong the second time. The net result is he’s trying to play to his political advantage.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

Trump lawyer **Rudy Giuliani** also joins the broadcast, telling Todd that “it’s great” if Trump lawyer Michael Cohen wants to cooperate with the feds “because it’s going to lead to nothing.” On the president’s upcoming Russia Summit, Giuliani says, “He has to sit down with Vladimir Putin. ... It’s a sign of how confident the president is that he did nothing wrong.” “But Putin’s going to have to meet him more than halfway,” he adds. [Watch the full interview.](#)

NBC News’ **Mark Murray**, USA TODAY’s **Susan Page**, AEI’s **Danielle Pletka** and The Washington Post’s **Eugene Robinson** join the broadcast’s roundtable for insight on the week in politics. On the four names being floated for the Supreme Court opening, [Robinson notes](#), “If conservatives would take a breath and look at these candidates they’d see they’re all really conservative as far as we know, as far as we can tell from anything they’ve written. I mean, there’s nothing that I’ve seen pointed out in any of their writings that indicates they’re closet liberals.”

**MTP: US AMB. TO RUSSIA HUNTSMAN: TOMORROW ‘ISN’T A SUMMIT’ BETWEEN PRES. TRUMP AND RUSSIAN PRES. PUTIN, ‘THE AGENDA IS THE PRESIDENT’S’**

***PLUS: “I Don’t Know If He’ll Make the Ask” Says Huntsman of Trump Asking Putin to Extradite the 12 Russian Intel Officers Charged by Mueller on Friday***

***ALSO: Sen. Warner (D-Va.) “Would Feel Much Better if There Were Other Americans in the Room” with Trump and Putin, Since Trump “Kind of Goes in and Wings It”***

***TONIGHT & TOMORROW: Lester Holt Anchors “NBC Nightly News” Live from Helsinki***

**JULY 15, 2018** – “It isn’t a summit... This is a meeting,” says **U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman** on “Meet the Press” of President Trump’s meeting tomorrow with Russian President Putin in Helsinki. “No state dinner, no joint statement, no deliverables that are going to be pre-packaged. You don’t know what’s going to come out of this meeting.”

When asked if Trump will ask Putin to extradite the 12 Russian intel officers charged by Special Counsel Mueller on Friday and if the paperwork has begun, Huntsman tells moderator Chuck Todd: “I don’t know if he’ll make the ask, but it may be part of the agenda. It may be part of their bilateral meeting together. We’ll have to see.”

“The agenda is the president’s. Everything will be his call, but I think it’s highly unlikely that you’ll see any change in Crimea,” shares Huntsman regarding NATO’s position that Crimea belongs to Ukraine and not Russia. [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Sen. Mark Warner (D-Va.)**, vice chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee, also joined the broadcast, telling Todd: “I really would feel much better if there were other Americans in the room making sure that we make the point that the first and top point of this agenda should be no further Russian interference in our elections,” after noting Trump “doesn’t do a lot of prep work for these meetings. He kind of goes in and wings it.”

Reacting to the indictments by Mueller on Friday, Warner notes, “It appears a rather strange coincidence that the very day that Mr. Trump calls on the Russians to hack into Clinton emails, well, the Russian spies actually try to take that action.”

“It’s abysmal that this administration has not made 2018 election security a higher priority,” says Warner. “I would feel a lot better if there was a concerted, whole-of-government effort to make sure not only at the state and local registrar level, but on the companies that manipulate and own the voter files and maintain the voter files behind the scenes. I think we need to really step up our game.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

In an exclusive interview, **Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska)** tells Todd: “If the president is giving in on lifting sanctions without Putin taking action, I think that would be a mistake.” The Alaska senator says that if Putin “wants a better relationship... he’s got to take actions to make that happen.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Tune in tonight as “NBC Nightly News” anchor Lester Holt broadcasts live from Helsinki ahead of the president’s meeting tomorrow with Putin.** [Read more about NBC News’ in-depth coverage.](#)

Radio host **Hugh Hewitt**, NPR's **Joshua Johnson**, TIME's **Elise Jordan** and The Cook Political Report's **Amy Walter** preview tomorrow's meeting on the show's roundtable, [with Johnson pointing out that](#), with Bitcoin, the Russians "literally minted money to hack our election system. Now, the president saying, "Well, I don't know if I'm going to ask for extradition" is stunning. If someone broke into the Bureau of Engraving and Printing and stole American dollars to commit a crime against the United States, it would be an immediate call for extradition."

[Read the full transcript](#) of "Meet the Press" this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**JULY 22, 2018 – PREEMPTED DUE TO EARLY SPORTS (THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP GOLF)**

**THIS SUNDAY: FORMER TRUMP CAMPAIGN AIDE SAM NUNBERG AND OHIO SENATOR ROB PORTMAN (R) JOIN "MEET THE PRESS WITH CHUCK TODD" IN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS**

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EXCLUSIVE

**Sam Nunberg**

Former Donald Trump Campaign Aide

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EXCLUSIVE

**Sen. Rob Portman (R-Ohio)**

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**Michael Isikoff**

Chief Investigative Correspondent, Yahoo! News; Author, "Russian Roulette: The Inside Story of Putin's War on America & the Election of Donald Trump"

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ROUNDTABLE

**Matthew Continetti**

Editor-in-Chief, Washington Free Beacon

**Eddie Glaude Jr.**

Chair, Center for African-American Studies; William S. Tod Professor of Religion and African-American Studies, Princeton University; NBC News and MSNBC Contributor

**Andrea Mitchell**

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

**Peggy Noonan**

Columnist, The Wall Street Journal; NBC News and MSNBC Political Analyst

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**MTP EXCLUSIVE: SEN. BLUNT ON PRESIDENT'S "FAKE NEWS" TWEETS: 'NOT MY POINT OF VIEW,' WON'T ANSWER IF HE BELIEVES 'A LOT OF THE NEWS IS NOT ACCURATE'**

***EXCLUSIVE: Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.) Reacts to Sen. Warren's Charge That Criminal Justice System is "Racist... Front to Back": "The Solutions Are There for Us"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Klobuchar Brushes Off Cynthia Nixon's Call for Socialism in the Democratic Party: "I Make of It That She's in a Primary in New York State and Running for Office"***

**AUGUST 5, 2018** – In an exclusive interview on "Meet the Press," **Sen. Roy Blunt (R-Mo.)** reacts to President Donald Trump's tweets this morning calling the media the "enemy of the people" and "dangerous & sick": "It's not my point of view. ... But you could certainly find people on the news saying things about the president that are not appropriate."

"The president really believes that a lot of the news is not accurate," adds Blunt. When asked by moderator Chuck Todd if he too believes that, Blunt replies, "There's a vast variety of how the same news is reported, so somebody is not – that middle of the road news that people my age grew up with is no longer the news." [Watch the interview](#), including the senator's defense of Rep. Maxine Waters (D-Calif.).

**Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)**, who is running for her third term in the Senate, responds to two high-profile Democrats on the broadcast this morning in an exclusive interview. On claims by Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.) that the criminal justice system is "racist... front to back," Klobuchar, a former county prosecutor, says she worked with "good" people, but "we know that there is racism in the system that needs to be fixed."

When asked about New York gubernatorial candidate Cynthia Nixon's call for socialists to fit into the party, the senator brushed off the rhetoric as "she's in a primary in New York state and running for office," adding "but what I've seen in our party is that, yes, there are divides along certain issues, but what unites us is so much stronger." [Watch the full interview](#), including the Minnesota senator noting she is "very concerned" about the legitimacy of the 2018 midterm elections.

Republican strategist **Mike Murphy** joins Todd to dissect Republican primary ads, specifically those from candidates who, as Todd puts it, “have noticed the trend: that the closer you are to Mr. Trump, the closer you are to winning.” Murphy predicts the 2020 presidential election: “My bet is you're going to have somebody Trumpian. ... If we have a bumpy midterm, the whole Trump thing in '19 could be a whole new ballgame.” [Watch the conversation.](#)

Republican strategist **Al Cardenas**, The New York Times’ **Helene Cooper**, The Washington Post’s **Robert Costa** and POLITICO’s **Eliana Johnson** discuss “QAnon,” described by NBC News national security analyst **Clint Watts** as “this idea that there is a secret source inside the intelligence community.” [Costa notes:](#) “There's not really an expectation inside of this White House that the president's going to somehow speak out on QAnon.” [Watch the discussion.](#)

[Read the full transcript](#) of “Meet the Press” this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

## **MTP EXCLUSIVE: OMAROSA MANIGAULT NEWMAN: I ‘HEARD THE TAPE’ OF PRESIDENT SAYING N-WORD, ‘WAS COMPLICIT WITH THIS WHITE HOUSE DECEIVING THIS NATION’**

***EXCLUSIVE: “Meet the Press with Chuck Todd” Plays Audio from Manigault Newman, Which She Says is a Recording of Her Firing by White House Chief of Staff Kelly***

***PLUS: Manigault Newman Calls for White House to Release Her Personnel File***

***ALSO: Tune in to “TODAY” Tomorrow for More From Manigault Newman***

**AUGUST 12, 2018** – “I have heard the tape” of President Donald Trump saying the n-word, and “when he talks that way, the way he did on this tape, it confirmed that he is truly a racist,” **Omarosa Manigault Newman**, former assistant to the president, tells “Meet the Press” moderator Chuck Todd this morning in an exclusive interview.

Manigault Newman, author of “Unhinged: An Insider’s Account of the Trump White House,” continues: “I was complicit with this White House deceiving this nation. They continue to deceive this nation by how mentally declined he is, how difficult it is for him to process complex information, how he is not engaged in some of the most important decisions that impacts our country. I was complicit and for that I regret.”

[The broadcast aired exclusive audio](#) from Manigault Newman, which she says is a recording of her firing by White House Chief of Staff John Kelly in the Situation Room on December 12th. “It’s very obvious a threat,” she tells Todd, calling for the White House to release her personnel file in response to the “significant integrity issues” Kelly mentions on the tape: “Release it so

the American people can see that I worked my butt off to make a difference in this country, and they were looking for ways to frame me, and then, they tried to buy off my silence, which is also unlawful.”

When asked by Todd how often she taped people, Manigault Newman replies, “I protected myself because this is a White House where everybody lies.” [Watch the full interview](#), and tune in to “TODAY” tomorrow morning for more from Manigault Newman.

In an exclusive interview, **Ohio Gov. John Kasich (R)** addresses this past Tuesday’s special election – “It wasn’t a good night because this is a district that you should be winning by, you know, overwhelming numbers” – as well as [a possible 2020 run](#): “I really don’t know what I’m going to do. Maybe I will. Maybe I won’t. I don’t know.” [Watch the full interview](#).

The New York Times’ **David Brooks**, former **Rep. Donna Edwards (D-Md.)**, former **Gov. Pat McCrory (R-N.C.)** and **NBC News’ Kristen Welker** join the broadcast’s roundtable for insight and analysis, including on Todd’s exclusive Manigault Newman interview. “To me, the dangerous thing, it’s all intermixed with the most sensitive subject in American history, which is race. And so you combine poisoning politics with racial bigotry and racial unfairness, and it can get very ugly. If this tape exists and it comes out in October that will put race right in the middle of the election in a very explosive way,” [reflects Brooks](#).

[Read the full transcript](#) of “Meet the Press” this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

## **‘TRUTH ISN’T TRUTH,’ SAYS GIULIANI ON “MEET THE PRESS” IN DISCUSSION OF THE PRESIDENT POSSIBLY TESTIFYING TO SPECIAL COUNSEL**

***PLUS: Giuliani Says Trump Tower Meeting “Originally for the Purpose of Getting Information about Clinton”***

***ALSO: Former CIA Director Brennan Tells Moderator Chuck Todd He’s “Been Contacted by a Number of Lawyers... About the Basis for a Complaint, an Injunction” Against President Trump***

**AUGUST 19, 2018** – [“Truth isn’t truth,”](#) Rudy Giuliani, lawyer for President Donald Trump, tells “Meet the Press” moderator Chuck Todd this morning in a discussion of the president possibly testifying to special counsel Robert Mueller.

“I am not going to be rushed into having him testify so that he gets trapped into perjury,” says Giuliani. “And when you tell me that, you know, he should testify because he’s going to tell the truth and he shouldn’t worry, well that’s so silly because it’s somebody’s version of the truth.

Not the truth.” When Todd replies, “Truth is truth,” Giuliani responds, “No, it isn’t truth. Truth isn’t truth. ... Donald Trump says I didn’t talk about Flynn with Comey. Comey says you did talk about it, so tell me what the truth is.”

Giuliani also shares the June 2016 Trump Tower meeting “was originally for the purpose of getting information about Clinton,” adding that Trump “didn’t know about that meeting. He found out about it after and by the time he found out about it, it was nothing.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

“I stand very much by” calling the president’s behavior treasonous, says former CIA Director **John Brennan**, also a senior national security and intelligence analyst for NBC News.

Brennan tells Todd he has “been contacted by a number of lawyers, and they have already given me their thoughts about the basis for a complaint, an injunction to try and prevent him from doing this in the future.” He also says, “I admire and respect Gina Haspel, and I want her to stay as C.I.A. Director because I think it’s important that the institution of the C.I.A. and the professionals be protected from this very, very abusive White House and Mr. Trump.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

PBS’ **Yamiche Alcindor**, radio show host **Hugh Hewitt**, NBC News’ **Carol Lee** and The Washington Post’s **Eugene Robinson** joined the broadcast this morning for insight and analysis, with Robinson reacting to Giuliani’s interview: “An extraordinary thing. Just throws more logs onto the fire of this administration’s truthfulness and candor. Or lack thereof. It’s just an amazing thing,” adding “it’s the new alternative facts.” [Watch the discussion.](#)

[Read the full transcript](#) of “Meet the Press” this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**MTP EXCLUSIVE: HILLARY CLINTON SAYS ‘OUR INSTITUTIONS ARE BEING SEVERELY TESTED RIGHT NOW,’ INCLUDING SEN. JOHN MCCAIN’S ‘BELOVED SENATE’**

***PLUS: Sen. Jeff Flake on his Endorsement in the Arizona Race: “Nobody Would be Asking for it ... This is the President’s Party Right Now”***

***EXCLUSIVE: Rep. Jerrold Nadler Says “the Role of Congress is not to Protect the President” but to Hold Him “Accountable to the American People”***

***NEW: President Donald Trump’s Job Approval Rating Remains Stable in New NBC News/WSJ Poll***

**AUGUST 26, 2018** – In an exclusive phone interview this morning on *Meet the Press*, **former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton** remembered Sen. John McCain, telling moderator Chuck Todd, “He leaves a legacy of service and courage,” adding that he “understood that we’ve been through perilous times before at home and abroad. But our institutions are being severely tested right now, including his beloved Senate. And he was, in every way he knew how, trying to sound the alarm.”

Clinton also addressed McCain’s belief in the Senate as an institution and said: “He really understood in the marrow of his bones what it means to be an American and how important it was for us to, yes, disagree and differ. But at the end of the day to come together, to work together, to trust each other to get things done.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Sen. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.)** joined *Meet the Press* this morning, remembering Sen. McCain: “It was like having a big brother who nobody wanted to mess with,” adding, “I don’t know that we’ll ever see anybody who’s like John McCain. I think he’s one of a kind. I think we can certainly try to follow his example and seeing the good in our opponents and recognizing that people may be on the other side of the aisle or have a different philosophy but they’re our friends and they’re fellow Americans.”

When asked if his endorsement in the upcoming Arizona race would help or hurt a Republican candidate, Flake said: “Nobody would be asking for it in the Republican primary I can tell you that ... this is very much, and you know I’m not happy about it but this is the president’s party right now. And I think that we’ll be sorry for that in the future, but that’s the case right now.”

On the possibility that President Trump would fire Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Flake said it would be a “big mistake” and “the first domino to fall”. Flake added: “There may be a few isolated voices saying that the president ought to fire him now. I can tell you as a body we’re saying, ‘Please don’t’.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

“I think the Mueller investigation has to continue, first and foremost. And the Committee has to defend the Mueller investigation against the president’s and the Republicans in Congress’ attempts to sabotage it, to discredit it, and to discredit the FBI and the Department of Justice,” said **Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.)**, the ranking Democrat on the House Judiciary Committee, in an exclusive interview this morning. Nadler added: “The role of Congress is not to protect the president, it’s to hold the president and any president accountable to the American people. And we ought to be holding investigations.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

New NBC News/Wall Street Journal poll numbers, conducted before and after last week’s conviction of Trump’s former campaign chairman Paul Manafort and the guilty plea of his former lawyer Michael Cohen, debuted on this morning’s broadcast and show that President Trump’s job approval rating remains virtually unchanged following last week’s events. [Read more.](#)

NBC News' **Tom Brokaw** and **Andrea Mitchell** also joined the program this morning, remembering Sen. McCain, [who had the most appearances of any guest on Meet the Press](#), appearing 73 times over the course of his political career. Brokaw [noted](#): "We're missing that in our public life these days, the kind of authenticity that [McCain] brought to the arena." CBN News' **David Brody**, NBC News' **Hallie Jackson**, NPR's **Joshua Johnson** and USA TODAY's **Susan Page** joined the broadcast's [roundtable](#) for insight and analysis on the week in politics and the legacy of Sen. McCain.

[Read the full transcript](#) of *Meet the Press* this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**MTP EXCLUSIVE: SEN. DAN SULLIVAN ON AG JEFF SESSIONS: 'HE'S DOING A GOOD JOB,' IT WOULDN'T BE 'POLITICALLY WISE' TO FIRE HIM**

***EXCLUSIVE: Sen. Amy Klobuchar Says Brett Kavanaugh's Confirmation is "Not Normal"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Klobuchar Says Rep. Keith Ellison "Hasn't Asked me to Campaign with Him... I Will Campaign with our Ticket when the Time Comes"***

***PLUS: Mayor Andrew Gillum says Rep. Ron DeSantis' Rhetoric "Has to be Toned Down"***

**SEPTEMBER 2, 2018** – In an exclusive interview this morning on *Meet the Press*, **Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska)** responded to moderator Chuck Todd's question on whether Attorney General Jeff Sessions has committed any fireable offenses and said: "As I mentioned, he can do it. Would it be politically wise? I don't think so. And I support Jeff Sessions in the job he's doing right now."

Sullivan added: "I supported Jeff Sessions when he was nominated. I certainly voted for him and I think he's doing a good job." [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.)** also joined the broadcast in an exclusive interview telling Todd that Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation is "not normal," adding: "We are not able to see 100,000 documents because the administration has said we can't see them, exerting their executive power; 148,000 documents that I've seen that you cannot see because they will not allow us to make them public so I can't even tell you about them right now on this show."

"I think that you could ask some very interesting questions about these documents that I'm unable to even say," she said.

Klobuchar also said she'd be in favor of bringing back the 60-vote threshold for Supreme Court nominees, saying of the filibuster: "I would prefer to bring it back," but adding that she doubts it would happen because no party in power is going to want to "hamstring themselves."

On if Democrats should walk out of the Kavanaugh hearing, Klobuchar said: "I think it's much more powerful, if we go in there, and we ask the questions... And if we just walked out, it would simply be one side asking the questions."

On whether she would campaign for Rep. Keith Ellison, Klobuchar said: "[I will campaign with our ticket when the time comes](#)," adding: "Right now, I'm focused on Judge Kavanaugh. He hasn't asked me to campaign with him. I -- that is where we are right now. And we have an incredibly strong ticket in Minnesota." [Watch the full interview](#).

When asked about Republican Congressman Ron DeSantis, Tallahassee mayor and Democratic Nominee for Governor of Florida, **Andrew Gillum** said DeSantis' "rhetoric, in my opinion, [has to be toned down](#)."

"We cannot afford to weaponize race and to go to the bottom of the barrel here," Gillum added, "honestly, people are going to take their cues from what their leadership says. And in this case, Ron DeSantis is the leader."

On the FBI anti-corruption investigation underway in Tallahassee, Gillum said: "I am a lot more circumspect about everything." Gillum said on being elected to public office at 23, "I was a bit naive that everyone that comes into my space has good intentions," adding: "Anyone who has done anything wrong ought to be held fully accountable." [Watch the full interview](#).

The Boston Herald's **Kimberly Atkins**, Washington Free Beacon's **Matthew Continetti**, The New York Times Magazine's **Mark Leibovich** and The Cook Political Report's **Amy Walter** [join the broadcast's roundtable](#) for insight and analysis on the week in politics.

Read the [full transcript](#) of *Meet the Press* this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**MTP: SEN. BEN SASSE TELLS CHUCK TODD: "THERE'S JUST WAY TOO MUCH DRAMA EVERY DAY" IN THE WHITE HOUSE; IT'S "A REALITY SHOW, SOAP OPERA PRESIDENCY"**

***PLUS: Kellyanne Conway on Woodward Book: "I Didn't Bring the Request to the President Directly"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) Says the Mueller Investigation is "The Issue of the Moment" Compared to Roe vs. Wade in Kavanaugh Hearings***

***ALSO: Kellyanne Conway on Whether There's an Investigation into the NYT Op-Ed: "Nobody is Investigating an Op-Ed," Adding that Pres. Trump "Thinks That We Should Find Out Who This Person Is"***

**SEPTEMBER 9, 2018** – This morning on *Meet the Press*, **Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.)** told moderator Chuck Todd that “there’s just way too much drama every day,” which is “distracting” the country from more serious issues. Sasse said, “I don’t have any desire to beat this president up, but it’s pretty clear that this White House is a reality-show, soap-opera presidency.”

Sasse added, "What you'd like is the president to not worry so much about the short-term of staffing but the long-term of vision-casting for America, pull us together as a people, help us deliberate about where we should go and then build a team of great, big-cause, low-ego people around you." He said, “Right now it feels like there's just way too much drama every day and that distracts us from the longer term stuff we should be focused on together.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Counselor to President Donald Trump, Kellyanne Conway** told Todd that she “did not” stop the president from speaking with Bob Woodward for his book, but when pressed on whether or not she brought the request to Pres. Trump, she added, “I didn’t bring the request to the president directly.”

On the topic of *The New York Times* op-ed, Conway said “nobody is investigating an op-ed” but said that Pres. Trump “has said publicly that he thinks that we should find out who this person is.” She added, “I don't believe in giving this person so much elevation and oxygen”...”but we all want to know who it is.” When Todd pressed her on whether it’s possible Pres. Trump gave an order to the Department of Justice to investigate, Conway replied, “he has said publicly what he feels.” Conway added, “If the Attorney General, the Department of Justice and FBI feels like they have oversight over a matter like this then they will make that decision.”

Conway also told Todd that the Chief of Staff, General John Kelly, is in charge of the staff and that “he is” doing his job, adding that she’s “pro-General Kelly as Chief of Staff.” As for who’s not listening to Gen. Kelly, Conway said, “These are people in books and in I guess anonymous op-eds. I'm not even sure they know the president or know John Kelly. It's not clear to me, who are I think motivated by conceit and deceit. And that person is going to suss out himself or herself because cowards like criminals always tell the wrong person. They always confess their crime to the wrong person.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Senate Minority Whip Dick Durbin (D-Ill.)** also joined the broadcast in an exclusive interview telling Todd that he believes the Mueller investigation is more important than *Roe vs. Wade* in questioning Kavanaugh, saying “the issue of the moment, clearly, is this situation with the Mueller investigation.” Durbin told Todd that all of the issues are “of importance” but “I can tell you we were focused on *Roe*, we were focused on the Affordable Care Act and denying health insurance coverage to millions of Americans. We tried to go after the fundamental issue and the one I think is the most important at this moment in history and that is what this man, Brett Kavanaugh, would do on the Supreme Court if he's confronted with a question involving the White House, the Mueller investigation.”

Durbin also spoke about reports of lack of control in the West Wing, telling Todd: "This is a matter of great seriousness and gravity. We should not be dismissing it...We are talking about consistent reporting over and over again about unpredictable, unprepared, unstable behavior by this president. In a matter of great national security and defense can we trust this president to make the proper decision, to make a thoughtful decision. These are things that I think should be addressed by his own party. But instead we hear the silence of the lambs." [Watch the full interview.](#)

Democratic strategist **Cornell Belcher**, The Resurgent's **Erick Erickson**, AEI's **Danielle Pletka** and NBC News' **Katy Tur** [joined the broadcast's roundtable](#) for insight and analysis on the week in politics.

[Read the full transcript](#) of *Meet the Press* this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

## **MTP: FEMA ADMINISTRATOR BROCK LONG ON HURRICANE MARIA DEATH TOLL: 'THE NUMBERS ARE ALL OVER THE PLACE'**

***ALSO: Long on Reports White House Considered Replacing Him: "Secretary Nielsen Has Never Asked Me to Resign"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Rep. Adam Schiff On Impact Of Manafort Plea: "Anyone Who Gets Indicted By Bob Mueller Goes Down"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Alan Dershowitz on Manafort Deal: "A Very Bad Day for the Trump Administration"***

**SEPTEMBER 16, 2018** – In an interview this morning on *Meet the Press*, **FEMA Administrator Brock Long** argued to moderator Chuck Todd that findings from multiple academic studies about the number of deaths attributed to Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico were "all over the place," adding that "I think the president is being taken out of context there."

He continued: "What happens is... you might see more deaths indirectly occur as time goes on because people have heart attacks due to stress. They fall off their house trying to fix their roof. They die in car crashes because they went through an intersection where the stoplights weren't working... There's all kinds of studies on this that we take a look at. Spousal abuse goes through the roof. You can't blame spousal abuse, you know, after a disaster on anybody."

Long also denied reports that Secretary of Homeland Security Kirstjen Nielsen recently asked him to step down in the midst of an investigation into whether he misused government vehicles in traveling to and from his home in North Carolina on the weekends, saying: "Secretary Nielsen has never asked me to resign...these vehicles are designed to provide secure communications

and the program was actually developed in 2008 — it ran for me the same way it's run for anybody else. It's my understanding that maybe some policies were not developed around these vehicles that we will clear up." [Watch the full interview.](#)

Also this morning in an exclusive interview, **Rep. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.)**, ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, spoke about Friday's announcement that Special Counsel Robert Mueller has reached a plea deal with Paul Manafort to cooperate in the Russia inquiry: "This sends a message to anyone who is in Bob Mueller's crosshairs right now, you better get to the special counsel and make your deal now. Because anyone who gets indicted by Bob Mueller goes down. And the longer you wait to come clean, the worse deal you're gonna get, the more time you're gonna face."

Schiff later added: "I thought he would hold out for pardon....But also Paul Manafort had to conclude watching the whole Michael Cohen saga, that trust and loyalty with Trump run in one direction only. You're loyal to him, he's not loyal to you. And so I think that sealed the deal." [Watch the full interview.](#)

Harvard Law professor emeritus **Alan Dershowitz** also joined the broadcast and provided this assessment on Paul Manafort's recent plea agreement: "I think both Manafort and President Trump acted too late. Manafort, if he was gonna make a deal, should've made it before he was convicted....And President Trump, if he was gonna pardon, he should've pardoned before Manafort agreed to cooperate....So there's not going to be any pardon now."

Dershowitz also disagreed with President Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani that Manafort's plea deal isn't as bad for the president as some believe: "This was a very bad day for the Trump administration. It's bad because he doesn't know what Manafort is saying." [Watch the full interview.](#)

Todd also spoke with **New Bern, NC Mayor Dana Outlaw** this morning, who provided an update on Hurricane Florence relief efforts in his city: "We're very concerned right now about trees that are continuing to fall down because of the saturated ground conditions," adding, "at this time, we're urging residents to stay inside and to not travel." [Watch the full interview.](#)

This week, the ***Meet the Press Film Festival in Collaboration with the American Film Institute*** (AFI) announced its 2018 film slate highlighting pressing issues ahead of the midterm elections. [Read more.](#)

PBS' **Yamiche Alcindor**, National Review's **Rich Lowry**, The Wall Street Journal's **Peggy Noonan** and presidential historian and author of "Leadership: In Turbulent Times" **Doris Kearns Goodwin** [joined the broadcast's roundtable](#) for insight and analysis on the week in politics.

[Read the full transcript](#) of *Meet the Press* this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.

**MTP EXCLUSIVE: ON JUDGE BRETT KAVANAUGH ACCUSATION, SEN. PATTY MURRAY SAYS 'HOW THE SENATE HANDLES ... WILL BE A TEST OF THIS TIME'**

***ALSO: Murray on the Need for an FBI Investigation: "Senate Republicans Have Predetermined the Outcome of That This Will be a He Says, She Says by Taking That Away"***

***EXCLUSIVE: Sen. David Perdue on Kavanaugh Confirmation: "There's No Rush Here"***

***PLUS: Secretary of State Mike Pompeo Says U.S. is Pushing Back on "Russia's Malign Activity Around the World"***

***NEW: NBC News / WSJ Poll Shows Democrats Hold the Advantage in November's Elections***

**SEPTEMBER 23, 2018** – In an exclusive interview this morning on *Meet the Press*, **Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.)** addressed the Senate's handling of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford's accusation against Judge Brett Kavanaugh, telling moderator Chuck Todd: "Congress failed the test in 1991 with Anita Hill ... how the Senate handles this and the Senate Republicans handle this will be a test of this time, of 2018, in the #MeToo movement."

Murray made the case for an FBI investigation into Dr. Ford's accusations, saying: "I have said many times, that the Anita Hill hearing was a disaster, but they did have an F.B.I. investigation ... There were other ways to judge this. The Senate Republicans have predetermined the outcome of that this will be a he says, she says by taking that away." [Watch the full interview.](#)

Also this morning in an exclusive interview, **Sen. David Perdue (R-Ga.)** commented on Judge Kavanaugh's confirmation vote stating, "there's no rush here," adding, "look if we don't get all the information this week I have total confidence that Senator Grassley will take his time and make sure we have all the information we need. There is absolutely no rush to judgment."

Asked if there is anything Dr. Ford could say that would change his mind about supporting Judge Kavanaugh, Perdue answered: "These are serious allegations. I hope Dr. Ford can be put in a comfortable situation, where she can provide the information. Look, this is a democracy. We have a judicial system. But we also have innocent until proven guilty. And so my view is that we need to hear from both parties and make sure that we do it in a timely manner." [Watch the full interview.](#)

**Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** joined the broadcast to discuss the United States' efforts to "push back against Russia's malign activity around the world," as the United Nations General Assembly gets underway this week. Pompeo stated that just last week the U.S. put sanctions on China for purchasing Russian weapons. Asked if it's fair to say that the Russians have not been helpful on foreign policy objectives, Pompeo noted, "it's a pretty fair assessment."

Pompeo also spoke to Todd about the conspiratorial nature of Congress, saying that certain members would be less conspiratorial if they could see what he saw from his positions of leadership both in the C.I.A and now the State Department. He added that while he tries to share as much information as he can with Congress that “sometimes being conspiratorial’s appropriate too. Sometimes asking hard questions -- it’s their job, their oversight role.” [Watch the full interview.](#)

New NBC News / Wall Street Journal poll numbers debuted on this morning’s broadcast showing that six weeks before the 2018 midterm elections, Democrats hold a 12-point lead in congressional preference among registered voters. [Read more.](#)

The New York Times’ **Helene Cooper**, National Review’s **Jonah Goldberg**, POLITICO’s **Eliana Johnson**, and MSNBC’s **Chris Matthews** [joined the broadcast’s roundtable](#) for insight and analysis on the week in politics. Additionally, **Marvin Kalb**, author of “Enemy of the People: Trump’s War on the Press, the New McCarthyism and the Threat to American Democracy,” [joined the broadcast.](#)

[Read the full transcript](#) of *Meet the Press* this morning, and follow the show [on Twitter](#) and [on Facebook](#) for the latest.