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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."*

CBS News

# FACE THE NATION

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Clinton Strategist

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-SC)

Senator DICK DURBIN (D-IL)

**MODERATOR/PANELIST:** Bob Schieffer – CBS News

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**FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS  
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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, will Hillary Clinton stay in the Democratic race until the convention? She's sure talking that way. And she continues to demand that the delegates and votes from Michigan and Florida be counted in full. Will she keep running when the primaries are over? We'll ask her top strategist and spokesman, Howard Wolfson.

Then we'll turn to the battle already shaping up between Barack Obama and John McCain over foreign policy, lobbyists and who the top vice presidential candidates might be, with one of Senator McCain's closest advisers, Senator Lindsey Graham and Senator Dick Durbin, who's supporting Barack Obama.

I'll have a final word on the death of Hamilton Jordan, who helped so many others deal with the disease that finally claimed his life.

But first, how long will the race go on, on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION, with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now, from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And good morning again.

Howard Wolfson is in the studio with us this morning.

Thank you very much for coming, Mr. Wolfson.

Mr. HOWARD WOLFSON (Clinton Strategist): Good to be with you, Mr. Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: I think we need to start with this controversy over what Hillary Clinton said about bringing up Robert Kennedy's assassination as one of the reasons that she's going to stay in the race.

Mr. WOLFSON: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: So let's just start by playing an excerpt of what it was she did say.

(Begin excerpt from videotape)

Senator HILLARY CLINTON: You know, my husband did not wrap up the nomination in 1992 until he won the California primary somewhere in the middle of June, right?

Offscreen Voice: June.

Sen. CLINTON: We all remember Bobby Kennedy was assassinated in June in California.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: What did she mean?

Mr. WOLFSON: Well, I appreciate you playing the entire remarks, because what she clearly said, and what she meant, was that, in previous election cycles--and she referenced first her husband's in 1992, and then 1968--we've had campaigns that have gone on into June and actually beyond. And so her reference to Senator Kennedy was a historical reference. The people in the room in South Dakota where she said this at the newspaper found nothing peculiar about it. She has said this before; there was no commentary or discussion about it when she'd said it before. And I think, unfortunately, her remarks have been blown out of proportion. She very quickly made clear what she meant. If she caused anyone any discomfort or pain--because it is obviously a very sensitive topic--she apologized. But she was talking about it in a historical context.

SCHIEFFER: I take your point, but she sort of apologized. She said, 'If I have offended anyone.' She didn't just say, you know, 'I made a mistake here.' And today, Mr. Wolfson, in the New York Daily News, she offers yet another explanation for this. Let me just read you a couple of the quotes from that. She says, "Some took my comments entirely out of context and interpreted them to mean something completely different and completely unthinkable." Well, OK, but...

Mr. WOLFSON: That's not--that's not a different explanation, that's a fact.

SCHIEFFER: But that's sort of saying it's somebody else's fault.

Mr. WOLFSON: Mm.

SCHIEFFER: And then she says, 'I realize'--let's see, I've got it here--she says, "I was deeply dismayed and disturbed that my comment would be construed in that way that flies in the face of everything I stand for, and everything I'm fighting for this election." That sounds like somebody who's suggesting that maybe she didn't do anything wrong.

Mr. WOLFSON: No.

SCHIEFFER: That it was the fault of others.

Mr. WOLFSON: She understood that this topic is a very difficult one for our nation, certainly for the Kennedy family. And she said that. On the other hand, to claim that she was making any kind of other reference in her comments is a--is wrong, and a misreading of what she said. And I think some in the news media did overhype this, and I think that's unfortunate. She has said these comments before. Nobody remarked upon them. She said them on that day. Nobody in the room, a group of journalists, remarked upon them. Bobby Kennedy himself, Bobby Kennedy Jr., has said there's nothing wrong with what she said. So let's get to the facts of what she was saying rather than what some in the media have interpreted that she was saying.

SCHIEFFER: Well, over on Fox this morning Terry McAuliffe, who I guess is her chief fundraiser and one of her main allies, said she hasn't apologized to Obama, nor should she.

Mr. WOLFSON: Well, her remarks were not about Senator Obama. They had nothing to do with Senator Obama. And so, you know, there would be no reason for her to apologize to Senator Obama. The remarks were not about him, had nothing to do with him.

SCHIEFFER: Well, can't you see how he might have taken offense to this, though?

Mr. WOLFSON: You know, I think if there was a misunderstanding, let's get beyond the misunderstanding. David Axelrod from the Obama campaign was on one of the other shows this morning, said that the...

SCHIEFFER: He was on ABC.

Mr. WOLFSON: ...said that this matter is--we're going to put this matter behind us. I think that's the right thing to do. Let's put this in some context. Both candidates now have two goals: They're trying to win the nomination and they're trying to unify the party at the conclusion of this process. Let's make sure that everything we do is geared towards those twin goals of winning and unifying. That's what Senator Clinton is trying to do.

SCHIEFFER: Well, while Mr. Axelrod said that, while he was saying that Terry McAuliffe was accusing Senator Obama of inflaming the situation--and those were his words, not mine--by waiting for three days to say he just thought that she misspoke. I mean, how could he be accused of inflaming the situation?

Mr. WOLFSON: Well, the Obama campaign did put out a statement almost immediately condemning the remarks. I think that those--that statement from Senator Obama's campaign was unfortunate. It's not consistent with what we've seen today from David Axelrod, who is speaking for the campaign Sunday morning. I'm going...

SCHIEFFER: Well...

Mr. WOLFSON: I'm going to take senator--I'm going to take David Axelrod's comments at face value. He's a friend of mine. He said that we're going to put this matter behind us. And I think for the Democratic Party, for the unity that we are all looking towards after we have a nominee--we still believe that nominee will be Senator Clinton--we need to do that. We need to keep the twin goals in mind of victory and unity.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what are you going to take Terry McAuliffe's words as? He's a member of your campaign team.

Mr. WOLFSON: Of course. Of course.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think perhaps he should have kind of held his fire this morning?

Mr. WOLFSON: No, absolutely--no, absolutely not. I don't--I think what the Obama campaign did on Friday was unfortunate. I think it was unfortunate to attack Senator Clinton's remarks without knowing fully what she had said. That's not what Senator Obama's campaign is doing today. We have a different set of remarks from David Axelrod this morning on Sunday than we saw from the Obama campaign on Friday. I think that's where we are today, that's a good place to be. I think both campaigns are going to move forward with the twin goals of victory and unity in mind. But there's no question that it was unfortunate and unnecessary and, in my opinion, inflammatory for the Obama campaign to attack Senator Clinton on Friday for these remarks without, obviously, knowing the full facts or context.

SCHIEFFER: But you will not in any way criticize Terry McAuliffe for what he said this morning?

Mr. WOLFSON: I think Terry McAuliffe was absolutely right.

SCHIEFFER: Really?

Mr. WOLFSON: Absolutely.

SCHIEFFER: You think he was absolutely right?

Mr. WOLFSON: Yes.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, I think we've probably gone as far as you're going to go this morning on this, so let's talk about something else.

She--Senator Clinton says she's in this race to the end. I mean, how far does this go?

Mr. WOLFSON: Well, it goes until we have one or--one of the candidates getting the requisite number of delegates needed to secure the nomination. You know, there's a lot of talk about 'Senator Clinton should drop out, the race is over.' The race isn't over. We just won a 40-point victory in West Virginia, a 35-point victory in Kentucky. We've won so many of the key swing states along the way--Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, West Virginia. The delegate race is close. There are three states and one commonwealth left to vote. We have the issue of Florida and Michigan to be resolved. And so this race still has a ways to go. And until one of the candidates secures the requisite number of delegates to secure the nomination, we don't have a nominee.

SCHIEFFER: Well, there's no way, it seems to me, under the rules--and they are the rules, and all games have rules, all business things have rules--there's no way for her to do that, it seems to me, going into the convention. I guess the question that I have is, is she willing to take this all the way to the convention and let it go to a vote? Because after the first ballot, as we all know from history, then those pledged delegates are free to vote for whom they wish to vote for. Would she let it go that far, that you would actually vote on it at the convention and then try to settle it on the second or third or some subsequent ballot?

Mr. WOLFSON: That would be exciting for pundits and for commentators and viewers. The goal and the hope and the expectation is that we will have a nominee well before then. We still believe that that nominee can and should be Senator Clinton. We think she'd be the strongest nominee against John McCain. That's the case we're making to superdelegates. To superdelegates we say, 'look at the states that Senator Clinton has won, the key swing states. Look at how she's polling now vis-a-vis John McCain. She wins in the electoral college; Senator Obama today loses in the electoral college. Let's get the best and most electable candidate.

And then we say, Florida and Michigan. We're not going to go into a convention only having seated 48 states. Everybody now, even the Obama campaign, concedes that the status quo with regards to Florida and Michigan, i.e. not ceding them, not counting their delegates, is not tenable.

On Saturday, the Democratic committee is going to look at his. We believe that they will reinstate Florida and Michigan 100 percent. That's what they should do. That will obviously help us, but it's the right thing to do.

SCHIEFFER: But she still won't have the number of delegates that she would need...

Mr. WOLFSON: But...

SCHIEFFER: ...even by doing that. But isn't that again, isn't it like changing the rules? I mean, like in a baseball game it's the team that gets the most runs that wins.

Mr. WOLFSON: It is.

SCHIEFFER: That's what they set out, and the rules. It's not the one that happens to get the most hits, or the one that makes the fewest errors.

Mr. WOLFSON: That's true. Baseball games last nine innings, football games last 60 minutes. We are not at the 60-minute mark, we're not at the nine-inning mark, we are at the point well before one of these candidates has secured the requisite number of delegates needed to become our nominee. When one of them does, that person will be the nominee. We still believe it'll be Senator Clinton. If it's Senator Obama, I and others in the campaign will be led by Senator Clinton and her husband in working hard for him and making sure that he becomes our next president.

SCHIEFFER: And you don't agree with those who say this is really hurting the Democrats come November to let this thing go on and on and on.

Mr. WOLFSON: I think if you look at the process, we've added millions of new Democrats into our ranks. We've had people come out and vote who have never voted before, both supporters of Senator Clinton and Senator Obama. I think this has been great for the Democratic Party, and at the conclusion of this we will be unified because the differences between Senator Obama and Senator Clinton are very small compared to the differences between the Democrats and the Republicans.

SCHIEFFER: Howard Wolfson, thank you very much.

Mr. WOLFSON: Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: A man who believes in making his case. We'll be back in just one minute to talk about the coming race in the fall.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And with us now from Sedona, Arizona, Senator Lindsey Graham, who is one of the key advisers to John McCain; from Springfield, Illinois, Senator Dick Durbin, who, of course, is backing his home state senator, Barack Obama, in the--in the race for the Democratic nomination.

Senator Graham, let me start first with you. You're out there at this little social gathering at...

Senator LINDSEY GRAHAM (Republican, South Carolina): Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...Senator McCain's weekend place there.

Sen. GRAHAM: Right.

SCHIEFFER: He had various people, Governor Bobby Jindal, Governor Charlie Crist of Florida, former Governor Romney, yourself and a lot of other people who are being thought of as possible running mates. What was this? Was this some sort of elimination contest, or what was this all about out there?

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, singing was last night, dancing's this morning. But it was a lot of fun. John is like a kid at Christmas showing off his ranch up here. John and Cindy and the Harpers invited us all up. Joe Lieberman was here, Sam Brownback. He barbecued ribs all night last night. There's 67 bird--species of birds on the ranch. I know, I've seen them all twice. It was a lot of fun. It's a chance for John to relax with some friends and supporters from the politics and business, and we had a good time.

SCHIEFFER: Well, was this the beginning of a selection process to decide who is going to be on the ticket? Or where is he on that?

Sen. GRAHAM: There is some vetting going on. John's going to head up that process. No, this was purely social. If you know anything about John McCain, he is like a kid at Christmas when it comes to showing off his ranch up here, and it's people who've helped John. His friends in the business world, some of this friends in politics. And I wish it was more, but it's not. I'm sorry. That's all it is.

SCHIEFFER: All right. All right.

Well, Senator Durbin, let me ask you first. You just--you just heard Howard Wolfson outline the explanation for why Senator Kennedy--Senator Clinton said what she did in bringing up the assassination of Bobby Kennedy, and he said that he's right with Terry McAuliffe that Senator Obama, he--she should not apologize to him, that she has no reason to apologize to him. Do you have anything you'd want to say in response to that?

Senator DICK DURBIN (Democrat, Illinois): No, I think David Axelrod put it in our campaign context. Listen, it was a careless comment. It was interpreted in a way that I'm sure Senator Clinton did not mean. She and Senator Obama are friends. She would never wish any misfortune on any opponent. And I just think that we ought to step away from this and move on.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Well, let's talk about some of the issues that are going to be coming up in the fall campaign if Senator Obama or Senator Clinton gets the nomination, running against Senator McCain. And I would just say, my guess is that the war, even though we haven't talked about it very much lately, is going to be one of the major divides in this campaign.

Senator Graham, how is Senator McCain going to handle this? After all, it's a war that not many people are very enthusiastic about right now.

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, I think Senator McCain'll make a--make a case that he saw what was wrong in Iraq for four years, Bob. As you know, we had the wrong strategy. I went with--to Iraq many times with Senator McCain, and it was clear to him we did not have enough troops and we were going backwards instead of forwards. And he's the one that advocated more troops when most people in Congress wanted to pull out. After we lost the 2006 election, the Republicans lost the House and the Senate, people running for the exit signs. And John McCain said, 'No, the right strategy is better security. We need additional combat power to allow the Iraqi people some breathing space.' And the surge was accepted by President Bush. And now here we are a year and a half later. In July of last year, 59 votes to set timetables to withdraw. This supplemental that was voted on Thursday, not one person came to the floor and said 'the war was lost, we need to get out of Iraq.'

And Senator Obama keeps talking about an immediate withdrawal, as soon as he gets to be president. The last time, I understand, he was in Iraq was in 2006. I would recommend that he go back. So much has happened since 2006 on the ground. It's been extraordinary. He's never really had a one on one with General Petraeus. Go back and talk--go to Iraq and talk to General Petraeus, talk to the Maliki government and see how things have changed. And he's a good man. I think if he would look at what's happened in Iraq, talk to General Petraeus and Maliki, I think he'd have a different view of what you need to do next. And I know it's the campaign season. You know, I would recommend to Senator McCain that they both go together, go to Iraq, get a briefing from our generals and talk to Prime Minister Maliki about the way ahead, the way forward. Because a lot's changed in 2006. I think it'd serve the country well to have that joint briefing.

SCHIEFFER: Well, do you think Senator McCain'd be interested in going to Iraq with Senator Obama? Are you proposing that, Senator Graham?

Sen. GRAHAM: Well, I think it'd be good for the country, because the next president's going to have to deal with Iraq. And so much has changed since Senator Obama was there. The testimony recently of General Petraeus and Odierno--the progress by the Iraqi government toward reconciliation, the fighting in the Sadr City against the Iranian militia--yes, I would think it would be good for Senator Obama to go back and see what's happened in two years.

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Sen. GRAHAM: And sit down with General Petraeus, what he hasn't done, and I--and if it's a campaign issue, I think both of them should go together. I'd recommend that...

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well...

Sen. GRAHAM: ...they have the same briefing.

SCHIEFFER: We're going to have to take a break for a commercial, but I want to get to Senator Durbin's reaction to that suggestion when we come back in just 60 seconds.



(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Senator Durbin, what about this idea that Lindsey Graham has just proposed, that Senator McCain and Senator Obama go to Iraq together, get some briefings and just make an assessment of what's going on there, and doing it during the campaign, before the election?

Sen. DURBIN: I'm not going to suggest what Senator Obama's schedule or Senator McCain's schedule's going to be in the remaining few months before the November election. I would hope that Senator McCain would join Senator Obama in meeting with some returning veterans and soldiers who enthusiastically support the GI Bill which John McCain opposes. I think that Senator McCain would come to realize that these veterans deserve the same good treatment coming back from this war as those who returned from World War II.

The second point I'd like to make is Senator Obama is not calling for the immediate withdrawal of troops, he's calling for an orderly, responsible withdrawal from Iraq. In the sixth year of this war, I think that that's long overdue, and I think he's on the right track.

But the last point I want to make, Bob, is one that I noticed in some of the comments of my friend Lindsey Graham. He made reference to this one on one with Petraeus. I can just tell you point blank that Barack Obama has had his opportunity to meet with General Petraeus, he has questioned him in committee. They have had this exchange in dialogue. So this is nothing new.

But this is unfortunately coming out of a script from a group called Veterans for Freedom, which Senator Graham and Senator Lieberman are on the advisory board of. This is a 527 that has produced an attack ad on Barack Obama, and that's unfortunate. It's unfortunate because they use an Illinois soldier, a Guardsman named Garrett Anderson, a staff sergeant who was a victim of an IED who lost part of his right arm and had traumatic head injuries. Senator Obama and I both worked hard for this veteran to get him the disability that he was entitled to. I visited with him in his home and I just--I would say to Senator Graham and to Senator Lieberman, take a look at this ad. This really is misleading and it really shouldn't be out in this part of the campaign. And I wonder how their being involved in it--these senators being involved in it--is consistent with Senator McCain's recent statement saying that if you have a title or position in this campaign, you shouldn't get involved in a 527 that produces negative ads.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Well, let's give Senator Graham a chance to quickly respond to that.

Sen. GRAHAM: I haven't been involved in anybody's ad. The facts are that Senator Obama hasn't been to Iraq since 2006. A lot has changed. He has said that if he got to be president, everybody'd be out by next year. General Petraeus at the hearing said he thought a precipitous withdrawal would undercut our efforts. He's never sat down and talked with the commander of the forces over in Iraq. I would recommend that he go back to Iraq. A lot's changed in two years. And if it's politics, let both of them go. Nobody's at a disadvantage.

As far as veterans, Senator McCain wants to do two things: help those who serve and leave, but he's not going to support a bill that CBO says will hurt retention by 16 percent, give \$52 billion to the people who want to leave the military and nothing for those who will stay. Sit down with military families who want to make the military a career, and ask them about Senator McCain's proposal to allow more benefits if you stay around longer and let the military member transfer the

benefits to their child or their spouse, so they can go to college. Sit down with the people in uniform and see if they would like something for their continued service.

The idea of Iraq is important. You need to make informed judgments. How can you make an informed judgment about Iraq if you haven't been there in two years?

SCHIEFFER: All right. Thirty seconds to respond, Senator Durbin. We're out of time here.

Sen. DURBIN: I can just tell you, the major veterans' groups support this bipartisan bill. When Senator Graham tried to raise an alternative bill by Senator McCain on the floor, six of his Republicans joined with Senator Webb and Warner and Hagel in a bipartisan effort for a bill that John McCain opposes, a bill for a new GI Bill that will give our returning veterans the same benefits as those who returned after World War II. Barack Obama supports that. I think it's the right thing to do for our troops.

SCHIEFFER: All right, time's up. Gentlemen, thank you very much. To be continued.

And I'll be back with a final word...

Sen. GRAHAM: (Unintelligible).

SCHIEFFER: ...in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: In closing, my friend Hamilton Jordan died last week, and his obituary was in all the big newspapers. It was front page of The Washington Post. The stories told how, as the boy wonder of American politics, he had devised the strategy that got an unknown Southern governor named Jimmy Carter elected president; how he had become one of the most powerful men in America as Carter's White House chief of staff. The stories were fine, but they missed the point.

The defining experience of Hamilton's life was not his time in the political spotlight, but what happened to him later and how he handled it. After leaving Washington, he contracted cancer and he beat it. By the time he was 50 he had beaten two more cancers, experiences which caused him to become an advocate for cancer awareness. He and his wife founded a camp for children with the disease. They raised money to fight it, and his wise advice on how to deal with it made a difference in the lives of thousands, including mine. In all, he contracted six different cancers until his body finally gave out last week at the young age of 63.

So many times he could have asked, 'Why me?' Instead, time and again, he asked, 'How can I help someone else?' We all want to make a difference. Hamilton Jordan did, even as he fought his own long battle.

And finally, on this Memorial Day weekend, when we honor those who gave their lives on the nation's battlefields, let us remember as well the wounded, those who came home from the battle not as God made them, but as war has left them. There are many fine organizations that help them. Two of the best are the Yellow Ribbon Fund and the Walter Reed Society. You can find them on the Web if you want to help.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week, right here on...

