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CBS News

# FACE THE NATION

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**GUESTS: Governor TIM KAINÉ  
Democrat, Virginia**

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Republican Strategist**

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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION: Russia bombs Georgia, a US ally; some 2,000 are dead. How should the United States respond? And the campaign goes on. Who will the candidates pick as running mates?

The situation in Georgia, that former Soviet republic, grows more confused, complicated and dangerous. Could the United States be drawn in? We'll go first to Beijing, where President Bush is, to get the latest information on the administration's thinking. Then we'll continue our look at possible vice presidential running mates. We'll talk this morning with Virginia governor Tim Kaine, who's believed to be high on Barack Obama's list. We'll get Republican perspective on the campaign from Karl Rove, who engineered President Bush's winning campaigns. Then I'll have some thoughts on old white-haired dudes.

But first, the growing crisis overseas and the presidential race back home 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. Well, the latest news is that troops from Georgia, the former Soviet republic, are pulling back from the disputed region where there has been intense fighting with the Russians over the last three days; but long-range Russian bombers may be expanding their bombing and artillery attacks on Georgia and a naval blockade may be under way. Georgia, of course, is a US ally now that wants to be a part of NATO, and has even sent troops to help American forces in Iraq. The administration has warned Russia that it risks significant long-term damage to US/Russian relations if all this continues. And we want to go first to Beijing this morning, where President Bush is attending the Olympics and our White House correspondent Jim Axelrod is standing by.

Well, Jim, you've been hearing from top administration figures this morning. I want to ask you how seriously this is being taken, and is there a chance the United States could somehow be drawn directly into this? Because we know, for example, that Georgia has asked the United States to help in bringing its troops in Iraq back home. So what about all this?

JIM AXELROD reporting:

Well, Bob, you know, top White House officials say they are very alarmed at what they call a dangerous and disproportion--disproportionate escalation of the violence on the part of the Russians. I think disproportionate's the key word there, Bob. Within the last couple of hours President Bush has talked with French President Sarkozy, who's also the head of the EEU right now, and officials say that the two men are on the same page, and that sort of gives us a sense of the parameters of what they expect to have happen. They say that what they must see in Georgia right now is a cease-fire, a de-escalation on the part of the Russians, and respect for Georgia's territorial integrity. So that gives you some sense of what the US and the West's position will be as they start to engage with the Russians.

Now, President Bush here in Beijing saw Russian Prime Minister Putin twice on Friday, and one report had at least one of those encounters as being very heated. Now, Prime Minister Putin's left Beijing to attend to this situation in Russia, he's gone back to Russia to deal with it, but the Russians are now saying what the West needs to do is not to interfere with its peacekeeping operation. So, Bob, this just doesn't have the feel of anything that's going to end anytime soon.

SCHIEFFER: Any word on whether the United States is going to evacuate those Georgian troops from Iraq and bring them back to Georgia?

AXELROD: Well, what the administration officials say right now is that they are 100 percent committed to getting this thing solved peacefully. All those kinds of things are up on the table. No definitive word yet about the troops. But they are trying to work the situation to keep a public face of sort of neutrality while they continue to pressure the Russians as much as they can and continue to offer help to Georgia as best they can.

SCHIEFFER: All right, Jim. Well, thank you very much. Jim Axelrod in Beijing on a very stormy night. Thanks, Jim.

Now to presidential politics back home, and we welcome Virginia governor Tim Kaine, who is believed to be under serious consideration to be Barack Obama's running mate. He's in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, this morning for a governor's conference.

And Governor, unless you want to announce that you have been chosen as Obama's running mate, or you want to withdraw your name from consideration, I will not force you to do the obligatory dancing around that question and go directly to the news. This...

Governor TIM Kaine (Democrat, Virginia): Thanks, Bob. Let's go right to the news.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, this morning, headlines tell it all: American presidents, as we look at this situation going on in Russia, have to deal with problems that sometimes don't come up at all in campaigns. So I guess my question this morning, Governor, is when we see what's happening today, doesn't that--won't that bolster John McCain's argument that the presidency needs someone with experience dealing with issues like these?

Gov. Kaine: Bob, I think the two concerns that Americans have are the state of our economy and our security at home and abroad. And this issue in Georgia obviously raises great questions, but I think as we look at security, what Americans most want is judgment. Experience is only positive insofar as it creates good judgment, and I think Senator Obama's strong case to the American people is that he will have the right judgment about how to balance America's military force with strong diplomacy to protect our interests abroad. He has spoken very strongly about the need to protect Georgia's integrity and sovereignty, has called on Russia to cease fire in the region and called on the international community to begin talks to protect Georgian sovereignty. But I think Americans, really--and I know Virginians better than those in other states--what we want is judgment.

SCHIEFFER: You know, in order to be a good president you have to get yourself elected president, and I'm hearing even some Democrats say that Barack Obama ought to be doing better right now than he seems to be doing. These latest polls, Gallup has Obama and McCain very,

very close, as does the latest Rasmussen poll. With the Republican Party kind of in the shape it's in right now, is Barack Obama's message just not getting through, or what seems to be going on here, in your judgment?

Gov. KAINÉ: Well, Bob, I would rather not spin Barack's lead in the polls as anything negative. I mean, he's ahead in the polls.

SCHIEFFER: But not by much.

Gov. KAINÉ: And in Virginia--take Virginia--but not by much, that's true. But look, take Virginia as an example. Virginia's a state that has not gone Democratic in a presidential election since 1964. The average of recent polls has Barack Obama narrowly ahead in Virginia, which is basically astounding. I think the Obama campaign has had a healthy underdog attitude since I signed on to be a national co-chair in February 2007. They've always thought this would be tough, they've always thought it would be close. But we are feeling very, very good about where the senator is in the polls and we obviously expect as America--the American electorate turns their attentions even more to this race in connection with the conventions, we expect to do--to do quite well.

SCHIEFFER: We're hearing some Democrats--like Chuck Schumer, the senator from New York--say that Obama is going to have to hit back harder at some of these ads that John McCain is running. Do you think he needs to hit back harder? What would you advise him to do from here in?

Gov. KAINÉ: Well, some of the ads that Senator McCain had been running, I just scratch my head at them, Bob. I mean, they really kind of seem out of touch with what the issues are. The whole ad about the, you know, the Paris Hilton and the celebrity thing--I mean, it was funny, but wearing a clown suit and juggling would be funny, too, but it doesn't connect with the concerns Americans have about gas prices, about the war, about the economy. So I think on things like that, shoot, I hope the McCain camp does more of those ads and we'll just let them do those ads.

Senator Obama has shown that he's a very tough campaigner. He doesn't take a punch, he doesn't take anything lying down. But he always will spin it back to positives because he's got a positive message and a positive record, and what Americans want to hear is about solutions.

Look at the ads that the two campaigns are running during the Olympics. I mean, this kind of wonderful athletic event, Senator Obama's running positive ads touting his particular vision for America, and Senator McCain is running the same old negative, Karl Rove-style ads that we're all tired of. So I think that that just shows a campaign that's a little bit out of touch with what Americans want to hear about right now. The--Senator Obama will be as tough as he needs to be, but he's got to always bring it back to the positive, and that's what he's so good at.

SCHIEFFER: Let's talk about the Democratic convention that's coming up. There's been a lot of hand-wringing about what to do about, or with Hillary Clinton. Are the Clintons...

Gov. KAINÉ: Right.

SCHIEFFER: ...going to be really out there supporting Barack Obama? When Kate Snow of ABC News interviewed Bill Clinton the other day, he gave a kind of peculiar answer, it seems to me. Let me just run this and you can listen to it here.

Gov. Kaine: Mm-hmm.

(Beginning of excerpt from ABC News)

Ms. KATE SNOW: Is he ready to be president?

Former President BILL CLINTON: You could argue that no one's every ready to be president.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: Does it matter if Bill Clinton is going to be out there campaigning for Barack Obama? Will he be out there? And what do you make of this sort of tepid reaction we're hearing here?

Gov. Kaine: Well, Bob, I have a great feeling. Again, in Virginia I see the forces--all the Democratic forces, whoever they were supporting before, coming together. And the Clinton camp and the Obama camps have come together very well in Virginia. You know, look, competition can create some challenging feelings, but the Democrats have shown again and again that we get on board and that we work together. The stakes are very, very high. I know that both Senator Clinton and President Clinton will have key roles in the convention. And I expect that, once we're there, that everybody's going to be together in a great way to do a historic job of turning out Democratic voters, and also independent and disgruntled Republican voters for Barack Obama in November.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean, do you have the feeling, though, that there may be too much Clinton at this convention? Hillary Clinton, we're now told, will speak on Tuesday, that will be her night. Bill Clinton will speak the next night. If this convention turns out to be some sort of nostalgic look back at what might have been, is that--is there a danger of that happening, or do you think that they actually will come together and that the Clintons will campaign hard for Barack Obama?

Gov. Kaine: Bob, I think we definitely will come together. I mean, again, you see the Democrats, I think, as unified now, and you'll see us unified going into November as you've ever seen us. There'll be historic turnout, I believe, of Democratic voters. And I don't think there's too much--there's a danger of there being too much of the Clinton family at the convention. It's important that we acknowledge Bill Clinton as a--as a great former president. It's important that Senator Clinton's public service record and her historic candidacy be acknowledged. The convention will also feature a great tribute to the Kennedy legacy and a focus on Ted Kennedy, who we've all kept in prayer as he's recovered, you know, from his illness. And so, sure, look, lionizing and appreciating the great leaders of the party is something that we always do at these conventions, and this one will be no different. But it is all part of a unified effort. We see the Democrats unified in Virginia as never before, and I see it across the nation.

SCHIEFFER: Good thing or bad thing: Allow Hillary Clinton's name to be placed in nomination, even though she knows she's not going to get the nomination?

Gov. Kaine: You know, Bob, I'll tell you this. I am not a great student of all the procedures and mechanics of things that should happen or shouldn't happen in the--in the rules of the convention, so I'm going to leave that to the--to the convention tacticians. I'm just a guy who's trying to be a good governor and trying to spread the word about Barack Obama to the general electorate. I think some of the internal decisions about how a convention operates, they don't really resonate that much outside of the convention hall. And so I'll leave those--I'll leave those decisions to people who really have that as their expertise.

SCHIEFFER: Would you advise, sir, to tell her people to kind of back off on this, or to press forward?

Gov. Kaine: Well, here's what I see in Virginia. You know, we had our Virginia state convention in mid-June, probably about two weeks after the primary season was effectively over, and I just saw a great unification of the Obama and Clinton camps. I think I read something in maybe The New York Times this morning about, you know, people switching their T-shirts, you know, the Clinton T-shirts, switching out for Obama T-shirts, and they're going like hotcakes. And, you know, I really sense that our party is getting together and unifying. And the other thing about it that I think is exciting is in Virginia, where we don't register by party, where the real game in any statewide election or federal election is independent voters, I just see great strength for Obama among our independent voters, among our military voters.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Gov. Kaine: In Virginia, one in 10 Virginians are veterans. We've got huge number of active duty, reservists and families. And people are really appreciating Barack's message that we need a civilian leadership that is as excellent as the servicemen and women and the contributions they make.

SCHIEFFER: Well, thank you, Governor, and we appreciate you being here. Hope to see you again.

And we'll be back in one minute with Karl Rove.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And with us now from Florida, Republican strategist and former adviser to President Bush, Karl Rove. Karl Rove is for the McCain campaign, but he is not of the campaign.

Well, Mr. Rove, you heard me say to Governor Kaine that a lot of Democrats are worried that Barack Obama's not doing better, that he ought to be doing better than he is. But the truth is, John McCain really hasn't caught fire either. I mean, our recent CBS News polls showed that only 17 percent of Republicans were, quote, "enthusiastic" about John McCain.

Mr. ROVE: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: Now, that has got to worry Republican strategists, it seems to me.

Mr. ROVE: Yeah. Well, I think you ought to point out that only 24 percent of Democrats were similarly that--had that same degree of enthusiastic--enthusiasm for Obama. You're right, there is...

SCHIEFFER: Well, actually, in our poll it was much greater than that.

Mr. ROVE: Yeah.

SCHIEFFER: You're talking about the Pew poll. But go ahead.

Mr. ROVE: Yeah, yeah. Look, two things. One is the race is closer than it ought to be. With a restive--with a restive electorate, with an economy that's sort of chugging along, with a war in the background, at the end of eight years of Republican rule in the White House Obama should be way ahead. And yet, as you point out, Gallup shows it--the last week, the average is 1.9 percent. If you look at the--at the Web sites that average polls, pollster.com has it at a 2.4 percent race, fivethirtyeight.com has it at a 2 percent race. This is a race where Obama should be way ahead, and the fact that he isn't says that there are grave doubts about Senator Obama.

SCHIEFFER: But what about John McCain? At this point, as Governor Kaine said, Obama's running positive ads and John McCain is running ads about...

Mr. ROVE: You know...

SCHIEFFER: ...Paris Hilton and that sort of thing.

Mr. ROVE: You know what?

SCHIEFFER: What he called the same old Karl Rove ads.

Mr. ROVE: Yeah. Well, with all due respect...

SCHIEFFER: Can you get elected president that way?

Mr. ROVE: With all due respect to Senator--to Governor Kaine, he's wrong. Senator Obama is running an ad in which he attacks John McCain as being in the pocket of the oil companies, a charge that got The Washington Post this morning even to raise some editorial doubts. And he's offering up a populist energy proposal that even has The New York Times expressing editorial qualms this morning. And remember, Senator Obama is the person who over the course of the last month has been standing up, suggesting that Senator McCain and the Republicans are going to mount racist attacks, and just before he left on his vacation in Hawaii called Senator McCain ignorant. I don't think that's particularly a positive campaign. In fact, I would make the argument that part of the reason why Senator Obama is in the shape he is in today is because he's failed to run a positive campaign. He's run a negative campaign. He's claimed to be something new and different, and yet given these--you know, it is really beyond the pale to sit there and insinuate that

Senator McCain is somehow going to attack him for being black, which is what he did for over a month.

SCHIEFFER: What do you think John McCain ought to do--and I want to get back to my question, can you get elected when the thrust of your campaign seems to be comparing the other guy to sort of an empty suit, Paris Hilton-type celebrity? Doesn't it have to go beyond that?

Mr. ROVE: Yeah. Well, it does. But I got to tell you, I think Senator McCain was right by raising these doubts about Senator Obama. They're on the minds of the American people. That's why when he went on this big foreign trip, you know, governor--McCain talks about judgment. What does it say about somebody's judgment that you can go to Iraq and not come out and credit the surge for the stabilization of Iraq and for putting us in a place--in a place where we can win the conflict? It is because Senator Obama has demonstrated such appalling judgment. He goes to Europe and does a big rally in Germany as if he's running for president of the United States of Europe, not the United States of America. It's these kind of judgment questions that Senator McCain was right to raise, because they were judgment questions that are sitting on the minds of Americans.

But it's not enough, I grant you that. He's got to do several other things. He's got to--he's got to--he's got to point out that there is no there there when it comes to Senator Obama's rhetoric. He's running on an empty--you know, empty rhetoric. If Walter Mondale had not used up the slogan "Where's the beef?" it would be a good one for Senator McCain to raise. And--but Senator McCain needs to do two positive things. One is he needs to use the 12 weeks that are left to lay out a bold agenda for domestic reform, and he also needs to talk more about his character. Now, he's doing part of the second. I mean, this energy debate has been positive for McCain because he says, 'Look, I'm in favor of drilling more, I'm in favor of nuclear, I'm in favor of renewables, and my opponent is in favor of taxing coal, taxing natural gas, and not building any nuclear plants,' and certainly, he's been opposed until very recent about drilling off the outer continental shelf. These things have worked to the advantage of Senator McCain. He needs to do more of those on issues like health and jobs and education.

SCHIEFFER: Does he need to separate himself from your old boss, George Bush? Separate himself more?

Mr. ROVE: You know, he needs to--he needs to recognize that every election is about the future, and he needs to describe who he is. If he--if Senator Obama has wisely attacked him saying, 'Third term of George Bush,' Senator McCain has responded badly to that. Rather than saying, 'You know what, here's who I am and here's what I'm about,' he's responded by saying, 'No, I'm not,' which is the wrong answer. If the question is who is not George Bush, Barack Obama is the answer. If the question is who are you and do you have a vision for the future, the answer could be Senator McCain. In fact, again, I would suggest that a weakness of Obama is that by harping so much about no third term for Bush, people have said, 'You know what? I--John McCain's not George Bush. He ran against him in 2000.' To the degree that McCain supplies more about who he is and ignores the question of third term, says 'Here's who I am and here's what my vision is,' the more he'll prosper and the worst Senator Obama will be.

SCHIEFFER: You have said yourself in the past that Obama probably should pick a red state governor, somebody just like Tim Kaine that we just heard just a minute ago from Virginia.

Governor Kaine seems to think that Democrats really can carry Virginia this time. Do you think that state's going to be in play?

Mr. ROVE: Yeah. I think it's going to be in play, but let me clarify. I didn't say that I thought he ought to, I said that I thought he probably would pick a red state Democrat, because I think he's going to make an intensely political choice, not a governing choice. He's going to view this through the prism of a candidate, not through the prism of president; that is to say, he's going to pick somebody that he thinks will on the margin help him in a state like Indiana or Missouri or Virginia. He's not going to be thinking big and broad about the responsibilities of president.

With all due respect again to Governor Kaine, he's been a governor for three years, he's been able but undistinguished. I don't think people could really name a big, important thing that he's done. He was mayor of the 105th largest city in America. And again, with all due respect to Richmond, Virginia, it's smaller than Chula Vista, California; Aurora, Colorado; Mesa or Gilbert, Arizona; north Las Vegas or Henderson, Nevada. It's not a big town. So if he were to pick Governor Kaine, it would be an intensely political choice where he said, 'You know what? I'm really not, first and foremost, concerned with, is this person capable of being president of the United States? What I'm concerned about is, can he bring me the electoral votes of the state of Virginia, the 13 electoral votes in Virginia?'

SCHIEFFER: Do you think--and we have about 30 seconds left here. Do you think that the Democrats do have a good chance of carrying Virginia, which they haven't done since Lyndon Johnson in '64?

Mr. ROVE: I think at the end of the day Virginia will be in the Republican column. 1976, I actually was involved in Virginia helping run the Dole campaign, and they came very close to winning it then. I think at the end of the day McCain wins it this time. But it will be a battleground state in large measure because Obama's going to put the money and resources into it, and Governor Kaine may have a special interest in trying to carry his--the commonwealth.

SCHIEFFER: All right, Karl Rove, we want to thank you for your insight this morning.

Mr. ROVE: You bet.

SCHIEFFER: We'll be back with a final word in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, we all had our fun at Paris Hilton's expense, but I laughed out loud when she did that spoof commercial pushing back at John McCain.

(Excerpt from Paris Hilton ad)

SCHIEFFER: My guess is that John McCain laughed, too. But politics aside, I am compelled now to stand up for old white-haired dudes and point out we actually have several advantages over others.

For example: If forced, we can drink coffee straight from a mug. We don't need to sip it through a little hole in a plastic top on a cardboard container to make it taste good. Since we grew up when telephones had cords and telephone booths had doors, we know how to keep phone conversations private. We were lucky enough to grow up when it was safe for kids to walk to school and we learned the lessons that came from having to organize our own after school games. It was pretty nice, actually, not having to suffer adults trying to relive their own childhood sports fantasies. We can even remember when you didn't have to drink water from a bottle, it tasted just fine from the faucet. I know there's a lot of wondrous stuff going on lately, but those were some pretty good days, too. So being an old white-haired dude is not such a bad thing, because we got in on some really good things, even though our memory sometimes fails us and we have a hard time remembering what they were.

Back with a preview of next week's guests in just a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: I should have added earlier that Karl Rove is an analyst for Fox News.

Now, for next week on FACE THE NATION: Democratic vice presidential possibility Evan Bayh and Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, who's said to be on the short list for John McCain's running mate. We'll see you then.

