



WASHINGTON WATCH
WITH ROLAND MARTIN

TRANSCRIPT

SHOW AIRING NOVEMBER 15, 2009

Host: Roland Martin

Guests: U.S. Army (Retired) Major General John Hawkins, former head of
Human Resources for the Army

Ibrahim Hooper, National Communications Director, Council on American
Islamic Relations

Dan Gainor, Director, Business and Media Institute, Media Research
Council

Rep. Donna Edwards (D-MD)

Askia Muhammad, news director of WPFW-FM and senior correspondent for
The Final Call newspaper

Karen Finney, Democratic strategist and commentator

April Ryan, White House correspondent for American Urban Radio
Networks

Robert Traynham, Comcast Network Washington Bureau Chief and *Roll Call*
TV host

Nia-Malika Henderson, White House reporter, Politico

Smokey Fontaine, News One/Interactive One chief content officer



TV One - Washington Watch
Contact/Producer: Jay Feldman
Show 11.13, News Maker Segment
Story/Angle: "Washington Watch" - Show 11.13

K. Wills Transcripts

**(SEG-
MENT 1)**

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: I'm Roland Martin, and this is TV One's "Washington Watch."

At the top of our agenda this week, the battle over abortion rights threatens healthcare reform. The President now wants to know how we will get out of Afghanistan before sending more troops in, and the tragic shooting at Ft. Hood raises questions of stress, terrorism, intelligence failures and political correctness.

Our "Washington Watch" news makers this week: retired General John Hawkins, former head of human resources for the U.S. Army; Ibrahim Hooper of the Council on American-Islamic Relations; and Dan Gainor of the Business and Media Institute of the Media Research Council.

With our "Washington Watch" panel, April Ryan, White House correspondent for American Urban Radio Networks; Robert Traynham, host of "Roll Call TV" on the Comcast Network; Karen Finney, political strategist and former director of communications for the Democratic National Committee; and Askia Muhammad, news director of WPFW Radio and senior correspondent for *The Final Call* newspaper. Plus, Congresswoman Donna Edwards of Maryland, member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee,

talking job creation.

Also, Nia-Malika Henderson takes a closer look at the First Lady's declining approval numbers and the President's declining weight. All that and more today on "Washington Watch."

[INFORMAL COMMENTS.]

MR. MARTIN: Joining me today to discuss the massacre at Ft. Hood, Texas, is Retired General John Hawkins, Ibrahim Hooper of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, and Dan Gainor of the Media Research Council.

Well, gentlemen, certainly glad that you are here. This week - difficult week. The Veterans Day, but the day before, the President went to Ft. Hood, Texas, to talk to the folks there about this terrible massacre: thirteen people killed as a result. The alleged shooter, Major Nidal Hasan.

But here's what the President had to say in speaking to that solemn ceremony at Ft. Hood.

[VIDEO CLIP.]

PRES. BARACK OBAMA: It may be hard to comprehend the twisted logic that led to this tragedy, but this much we do know. No faith justifies these murderous and craven acts. No just and loving God looks upon them with favor. For what he has done, we know that the killer will be met with justice in this world and the next.

[END OF VIDEO CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: Now, Dan, you wrote that you were critical of the media. They were too afraid to use the word "terror." And it really didn't happen 'til after the President used those words. Why did you make that statement when, frankly, we really didn't know *what* the heck happened? There was no informa- -- no s- --

MR. DAN GAINOR: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- solid information.

MR. GAINOR: -- there was a lot of information, and the media - what they did [was] before the President came out and spoke, 93 percent of the stories didn't even mention the *possibility* of terrorism. So, it's not like they said, "Well, maybe it's this," and raised the question. That's what journalists are supposed to do: *raise questions*.

Then, as soon as the President comes out - and you heard what he said - just *hints* at it, hints that it's rad- -- radical Islamic terror - then suddenly the gloves are off. Fifty percent of the news stories since then on the network news have mentioned the *possibility*, and now we find more and more information.

MR. IBRAHIM HOOPER: Well, we - we *still* don't know that it's -

MR. GAINOR: It's true.

MR. HOOPER: -- an act of terrorism. We don't know *why* he did it. He - he hasn't even *spoken* to investigators, from my under- -- what I understand. There could be a tremendous number of

motivations and - and issues that drove him to this. *We don't know.* So, to call it an act of terror is to rush to judgment, to jump to a conclusion that just - the information isn't there right now.

MR. GAINOR: [Crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: And look - and look. But here's the deal, though. We have any number of examples -

MR. HOOPER: We don't -

MR. MARTIN: -- in ter- --

MR. HOOPER: -- *know* that - [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- any number of examples in terms of things that were initially reported, that all of a sudden those things change. We first heard that it was a female cop who took him down. Now, all of a sudden, we hear that it was *another* cop that actually took him down. People were saying that he was dead. Then all of a sudden, he was alive.

MR. HOOPER: Said there were -

MR. MARTIN: And so the - the -

MR. HOOPER: -- three gunmen.

MR. MARTIN: -- three gunmen, two pe- -- other people - two other folks arrested. So, there was *so much* rush to judgment.

From your vantage point, General Hawkins, serving in the U.S. Army, is it wise for folks to step back and not begin to make assumptions, but to truly wait for the truth to come out, if you will?

MAJ. GEN. JOHN HAWKINS: Well, I can guarantee you, and I can guarantee the folks at home the United States Army is not going to rush to judgment. And others may decide that it was this reason or the other reason, but we will make sure that we know exactly what took place. There is not one group of people that's hurt more by the fact that we lost these soldiers and that we had other soldiers injured. Their families and their well being is the primary focus of everybody from the Pentagon down to the squad level. And so our heart goes out to them. We're so sorry that this took place.

But we're going to look this thing over from top to bottom, and we're not going to rush to anybody's judgment about it. We're going to find out what happened and why.

MR. MARTIN: But is - isn't it right, though, for people to be careful to jump to assumptions [sic]? I remember Oklahoma City. I was on the ground in Oklahoma City three hours after that bomb blast went off, and I remember that people were initially saying, "Had to be terrorists."

MR. HOOPER: "Middle Easterners."

MR. MARTIN: And there was a woman who was pregnant, and people were so angry, they were stoning that house. She was hiding in the closet.

MR. HOOPER: Nadia[?]* Salaam.

MR. MARTIN: And so - and, see? And all that drama there. Then all of a sudden, we find out it's a White guy who was in the

military.

So, the rush to judgment is one thing, but what about this whole notion, though, of the criticism of Muslims? All of a sudden, you have people out here saying that, "Look. They should somehow be checked."

Here - here is actually a comment that was made, a stunning comment on Fox News Channel's "The Morning Show," Brian Kilmeade.

Let's play that. I want to hear that. We'll talk about it.

[VIDEO CLIP.]

MR. GERALDO RIVERA: -- which is - [crosstalk].

MR. BRIAN KILMEADE: Do you think it's time for the military to have special debriefings of Muslim Army civili- -- officers - anybody enlisted? Because -

MR. RIVERA: Well -

MR. KILMEADE: -- if I'm gonna be deployed in a foxhole, if I'm gonna be stickin' [?] in an outpost, I gotta know - I gotta know the guy next to me is not gonna wanna kill me.

MR. RIVERA: -- bu- --

[END OF VIDEO CLIP.]

MR. MARTIN: Now -

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: Well, that -

MR. HOOPER: I mean at one point in American history, certain groups have been stigmatized, whether it was the Irish, whether

it was the Asian-Americans, whether it was Catholics, or Protestants, or African-Americans, or Jews. Now it happens to be American Muslims that are somehow singled out as a fifth column, suspect. "There's something wrong with this group of people."

You'd think we'd learn through our history that we - we don't need a group of people to go through this kind of demonization to come through on the other side as "real" Americans.

MR. MARTIN: Well, here's s- --

MR. GAINOR: [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: -- but here's - here's something interesting, Dan. And Daniel Zwerdling of NPR had - had a report dealing with some comments allegedly made by Hasan at Walter Reed six years ago. Here's a portion of his report. Then I want you to comment, then the General.

[GRAPHIC OF PHOTO HASAN WITH SOUND BITE FROM NPR REPORT.]

MR. DANIEL ZWERDLING: You know all those media reports about Hasan felt some soldiers harassed him for being Muslim?

VOICE: Um-hum.

MR. ZWERDLING: Right? Well, it turns out that some of his supervisors and instructors did the *opposite*. They told colleagues that they repeatedly bent over backward to support and encourage him, despite all his problems, because, number one, they didn't have firm evidence that he was unstable. Number two,

they kept searching their own souls. Instructors wondered, "What if we're discriminating against this guy because we're uncomfortable with his religious views?"

Oh, and one more thing. These officials tell colleagues that they did not know *anything* about those e-mails that Hasan was reportedly sending to an alleged Islamic extremist overseas. You know, intelligence agencies say they told some people at Walter Reed, but these officials claim they did not hear it.

[END OF QUOTE.]

MR. MARTIN: Dan, folks are saying political correctness is what drove -- what drove this to happen.

MR. GAINOR: Well, I think political correctness is what's driving both the Obama administration from hiding from saying the word "Islam" or "Muslim" anywhere in this, or saying the word "terror" in all this, and the media are feeding off of that.

And that's just ridiculous.

MR. HOOPER: So -

MR. GAINOR: We're no- -- we --

MR. MARTIN: Again, ho- -- how do -

MR. GAINOR: -- we're no- --

MR. MARTIN: -- how -

MR. GAINOR: -- we're not at war with -

MR. MARTIN: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. GAINOR: -- Islam.

MR. MARTIN: -- how do you f- -- but you said they're feeding off of it, but if you do not have the facts, if you don't know for sure, why even make a statement without operating from a position of fact?

MR. GAINOR: Becau- -- wait a s- --

MR. HOOPER: Because there -

MR. GAINOR: -- no, wait.

MR. HOOPER: -- are those -

MR. GAINOR: No, wait a second -

MR. HOOPER: -- there are those who want -

MR. GAINOR: -- because you're saying -

MR. HOOPER: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- Dan, go ahead. Then Ibrahim.

MR. GAINOR: -- well, what - first of all, you're saying, "Oh, Muslims are being demonized."

We are not at war with Islam, but we are at war with *radical* Islam, and so you can't separate the two. The fact - when they're talking about people in foxholes -

MR. MARTIN: Whoa[?].

MR. GAINOR: -- there are some radicals out there -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. GAINOR: -- that are trying to kill our troops.

MR. MARTIN: But - but - but -

MR. GAINOR: And this - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- but there[?] are broad assumptions.

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: You *have* to - you *have* to separate the two. You have to separate the two. It's very important that we leverage the ability of Muslim and - and Islamic folks to help the United States as we try to secure this country. That's very important. And you will not get that sort of support if you don't let them know that they will be treated equally.

You know, the idea of diversity in the military is extremely important to the success. However, my Army will not hold its mouth shut because of something called "political correctness." Now, there may be a reason that folks felt that after spending over 2 to \$300,000 and six years of education on this guy, that they could probably get him to get his mind straight. *Possibly*. I don't know. Or, it could have been that they found out some leads that he might have that might take us to other terrorists.

But I can tell you this. In *my* Army, it is more difficult to come forward with a complaint of discrimination than it is to be *accused* of discrimination.

MR. MARTIN: M-m-m. I- -- Ibrahim.

MR. HOOPER: And -

MR. MARTIN: Ho- -- but how does it make *you* feel when you hear folks talk about I mean literally checking -

MR. HOOPER: -- well -

MR. MARTIN: -- Muslims - making them undergo *tests* before they even go into the military?

MR. HOOPER: When these kinds of incidents - these tragic

incidents - happen, people come out of the woodwork to promote the agenda of the demonization of Muslims. I asked my esteemed colleague here - we were - I was at the office at our civil rights organization last night with the D.C. police, because we're getting a number of death threats. Are those terror threats? Are th- -- when they say they're gonna put a .45 slug in my brain and come and blow us up, are those terrorists threat[s], or is it only terrorism if a *Muslim* does it?

MR. MARTIN: But, Dan, shouldn't we also -

MR. GAINOR: [Crosstalk] - it's not only terrorism - [crosstalk]
-

MR. MARTIN: -- shouldn't we also be very careful because we remember a Muslim Army chaplain who was accused of having links to terror organizations at Guantanamo Bay? And what happened? They were false allegations. This guy was thrown in solitary confinement 72 days. It was James Yee.

MR. HOOPER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: He was thrown in. Not true. And so when people are saying, "Well, I need to be careful." Yes. If you're going to make an allegation, you would hope somebody would be careful to say, "Hey, I'm not quite sure what's" - "what's going on here."

But I just think when, all of a sudden, we begin to feed this whole thing of, "let's distrust all American Muslims in the military," that's a problem.

MR. GAINOR: But two points. One, we need to be careful, but we

still need to raise the *question*. This is a job of the media, to raise tough questions. And when it - what appears to most people - when a guy's got a business card that says "SOA," "Soldier of Allah," on a -

MR. HOOPER: "*Servant of Allah.*"

MR. GAINOR: -- business card - yeah. A- -- again -

MR. MARTIN: No, no, no, no, no.

MR. GAINOR: So - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: No.

MR. GAINOR: -- there's[?] that question.

MR. MARTIN: [Crosstalk] - no, no. Wait a min- -- wait a minute.

No, perfect example!

MR. GAINOR: [Crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: You -

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: That's a different thing.

MR. MARTIN: -- you just said one thing, and he said another.

What's true? What's the fact? What is true?

MR. GAINOR: So, we should be, uh, having that debate.

MR. MARTIN: No, no, no, no, no!

MR. GAINOR: Is it terrorism?

MR. MARTIN: No, no, no, no, no! No, no, no.

MR. GAINOR: That's a good point.

MR. MARTIN: No. Bu- -- bu- -- but the problem comes in when we make a judgment that this is true. There're people who were saying, "He shouted" - "He shouted," uh, something about "Allah."

VOICE: Allah -

MR. HOOPER: "*hu akbar*," yeah.

MR. MARTIN: But then o- --

MR. GAINOR: [Crosstalk.]

MR. MARTIN: -- then people say that didn't happen. But when you had people, like -

MR. GAINOR: But we do know -

MR. MARTIN: -- but you -

MR. GAINOR: -- but you had -

MR. MARTIN: -- but you ha- --

MR. GAINOR: -- we *do* have witnesses [to] what he did.

MR. MARTIN: Bu- -- no, no. But you had people like Laura Ingraham and others who ran with that, and they said, "It happened. It's a fact," when it wasn't.

MR. GAINOR: But loo- --

MR. MARTIN: *And that's what you're doing.*

MR. GAINOR: But look at all the people who ran with Tiller and the Holocaust Museum, saying, "Oh, that's right-wing hate." The guy - the crazy who attacked the Holocaust Museum was a guy who was so dissatisfied when *Ronald Reagan* was President - by the way, conservative -

MR. HOOPER: [Crosstalk] - why can't the -

MR. GAINOR: -- but he attacked -

MR. HOOPER: -- shooter at -

MR. GAINOR: -- he at- --

MR. HOOPER: -- Ft. Hood be a crazy guy?

MR. GAINOR: -- but he atta- -- but he attacked the United States government when Ronald Reagan was President, so -

MR. MARTIN: I understand that.

MR. HOOPER: Well, part -

MR. GAINOR: -- but the media --

MR. HOOPER: -- part of th- --

MR. GAINOR: -- the same media were tryin' to say, "That's right-wing," but they won't say, "This might be terrorism" -

MR. MARTIN: There are -

MR. GAINOR: -- so it's a double standard.

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: I - I am, unfortunately, somewhat disgruntled at the American public to a certain extent, because all sorts of groups are jumping to all sorts of conclusions that support their idiosyncrasies and political backgrounds. You have a lotta folks on one side that say, "Oh, this is too much attention being paid to diversity."

Well, I gotta tell you something. That is *certainly* not the case.

MR. MARTIN: I mean - - you - you -

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: *More* attention needs to be -

MR. MARTIN: -- had Michelle Malkin, the conservative columnist, even wrote that, "'How did Ft. Hood'" - "'Hood happen?'" obtuse Washington asks.

"Simple. Blind diversity equals death."

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: That's -

MR. MARTIN: So, the agenda here really is, "I want to attack diversity - not really find out what happened at Ft." --

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: And then -

MR. MARTIN: -- "Hood."

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: -- and then folks decided they would read into what the chief of staff of the Army said about diversity. He was not saying that he hopes this didn't happen because we're paying too much attention to diversity. He was saying that he hopes for diversity's sake and the well being of our Army, that folks don't jump to conclusions and then try to take it out on other good, hard-serving Muslim soldiers.

MR. MARTIN: It is natural for us, Dan and Ibrahim - I want you to jump in here - for us to make conclusions - or, not - no- -- not - I'm sorry; not "make conclusions," but to certainly raise questions. But I'll always say that you must operate from a set of facts. You must - if you're asking the questions, you're asking it to *gain* information, as opposed to "I am *assuming* information," so when a Bill O'Reilly says, I have the highest-rated show on cable television, so I'm gonna tell you this is" - "this was terror. This was Islamic terror" - without *any* basis of fact.

It's simply your opinion. That is what is dangerous when you go - when you said the opinion is a fact, and you're not basing it upon fact.

MR. GAINOR: But we see that every *night* on the nightly news shows, and those are the nightly news shows that talked about Tiller, and they - they built up this whole big theme -

MR. MARTIN: Absolutely!

MR. GAINOR: -- of right-wing hate -

MR. MARTIN: And - and -

MR. GAINOR: -- but they didn't -

MR. MARTIN: -- and -

MR. GAINOR: -- tell us.

MR. MARTIN: -- and I -

MR. GAINOR: Now they're double-standarding [sic] it and -

MR. MARTIN: No, no.

MR. HOOPER: [Crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: And -

MR. HOOPER: -- don't take it out on American Muslims, because you're upset ab- -- about coverage of -

MR. GAINOR: No, but what we're upset -

MR. HOOPER: -- another issue.

MR. GAINOR: -- over - I think more rightly, what we're upset about is 13 dead Americans at Ft. Hood.

MR. MARTIN: Right! But -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. GAINOR: *That's* what we're upset -

MR. HOOPER: And we were --

MR. GAINOR: -- about.

MR. HOOPER: -- the first ones to issue the statement -

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: But -

MR. HOOPER: -- condemning it.

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: -- but we need to - we need to get at the reason for this person being allowed to stay in the Army and be around soldiers in his capacity. We need to get at is it really that important that we take a hardcore view at people that may want to say that their religion won't allow them to do something, that they want to get out? This guy wanted to *get out!* Okay?

Should - should we say, "Just because we invested 2 to \$300,000 in someone" - that's a lot of money, but people make mistakes. So, you cut your losses. It's done every day in business.

We need to look at what happened and why. It may have *been* Islamic zealots of some sort. It m- -- it me- -- it may have *been* the reason. But for whatever reason, this person - we need to figure out why this person was allowed to still do what he was doing in the United States -

MR. MARTIN: No- --

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: -- Army.

MR. MARTIN: -- and I'll make -

MR. HOOPER: They[?] -

MR. MARTIN: -- that - a- -- a- -- a- --

MR. HOOPER: -- were trying to get out.

MR. MARTIN: -- and I'll - and I - and I'll make this point.

Another news story this week was John Muhammad, who was put to death in Virginia - all the initial reports said, "Hey, according to your FBI reports, [it] had to be a White guy who's a serial killer." They were all stunned when it was an African-American. And why did he do it? Not because he hated America, but because it had something to do with his ex-wife.

MR. HOOPER: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: You never know until you get the facts. And I'm saying focus on the facts.

MAJ. GEN. HAWKINS: You gotta get the facts.

MR. MARTIN: General, we certainly appreciate it. Ibrahim, Dan, thank you so very much for -

MR. GAINOR: Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: -- joining us.

Folks, coming up we'll have General Colin Powell's advice to the President on Afghanistan, and our "Washington Watch" panel weighs in on that *huge* decision. Up next, White House correspondent April Ryan, "Roll Call TV" host Robert Traynham, Democratic strategist Karen Finney, and *Final Call's* Askia Muhammad. And later, Politico's Nia-Malika Henderson will tell us what's the deal with the President's falling weight and the First Lady's falling poll numbers.

Stay tuned to "Washington Watch."

[END.]

(SEG-
MENT 2))

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: Aw, man. Our panel's already fired up, and we haven't even started yet.

Joining me today on "Washington Watch," April Ryan, White House correspondent for American Urban Radio Networks; Robert Traynham, host of "Roll Call TV" on the Comcast Network; Karen Finney, political strategist and former director of communications for the Democratic National Committee; and a newbie in the house, Askia Muhammad, news director of WPFW Radio and senior correspondent for *The Final Call* newspaper.

You probably didn't think you were going to be called a newbie on this show, Askia.

MR. ASKIA MUHAMMAD: Well, I like being a neophyte once again.

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN: All right. Let's get right to it. Afghanistan - a lot of meetings this week at the White House on this very issue, and John McCain - Senator McCain saying he wants an answer now on Afghanistan. But earlier this week, I talked to General Colin Powell on the "Tom Joyner Morning Show" about this issue, and this is what he said he told the President when it came to decision making on Afghanistan.

[GRAPHIC WITH PHOTO OF MR. POWELL AND QUOTE.]

SEN. COLIN POWELL: What I have advised him is not to be rushed

into a decision, because this one is the decision that will have consequences for years to come. The President has to measure what kind of base is he putting this new strategy on, because it isn't just what we do. What - what are - what do the *Afghans* do? So, Mr. President, don't get pushed by the left to do nothing. Don't get pushed by the right to do everything. You take your time, and you figure it out. You're the commander-in-chief, and this is what you were elected for.

[END GRAPHIC.]

MR. MARTIN: All right. Sounds [like] smart advice to me.

MS. KAREN FINNEY: Absolutely

MS. APRIL RYAN: It is. It definitely is.

MS. FINNEY: Well - and what's been interesting is that the Republicans have been saying, you know, "Come on. What's taking so long?" and, yet, on healthcare they're saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa! Slow down! Slow down! We've only been talking about this for six or eight months" - right?

What's wrong with the President taking his time to make sure that we have the right strategy? And I'll tell you part of the problem in Iraq, obviously, was that we didn't have a clear strategy and a clear mission. I have a friend who served there, who said, "I would've taken a clear mission over more troops."

MR. MARTIN: You know, I - I'll tell you, Robert, when I was talking to a troop serving in Iraq - three tours - he said when

they went in, they went in. They went, "Okay. What now?" He said it pretty much was, you know, decide what the vision is on the fly. He said, "But we - soldiers - we always want to know 'What's the game plan?'"

Is it smart for this president to say, "Look, this is" - as - as Colin Powell said, "this is going to define my presidency. Let's get this thing as right as best as we can"?

MR. ROBERT TRAYNHAM: Anytime troops are in harm's way, you need to be methodical. You need to know exactly what you're doing. There's no question about it.

Having said that, here're the realities on the ground. The fact of the matter is [sic] that President Obama sent 17,000 additional troops over there. They are trying to prop up the Karzai government over in Afghanistan, and the diplomats on the ground - not military folks, but the diplomats on the ground, Roland, are saying, "Mr. President, this thing is deteriorating day by day by day, so we need action now."

And so what the President has to do is he has to step back and say, "Okay. I understand that the" - "that the situation on the ground is deteriorating, but I" - "I'm sending people's lives at stake here."

So, frankly, he's stuck between a rock and a hard place, and he needs to make a decision sooner, rather than later.

MS. RYAN: Roland, no matter what side of - of politics you stand on, be it Republican or Democrat, this president is going to own

this - no matter what - for history's sake. You've got to remember. Even if he sends the 40,000, even if he sends a smaller number, the issue is a timeline. When do they come out.

Also, this will not produce - just like Iraq - a military win. *It's not gonna happen.* What's going to happen is it's going to be a combined win - if there *is* a win: military, political, economic, and also development.

But you have to remember this is a place in the world that Alexander the Great was defeated in, also the Russians. And when he is thinking about -

MR. MARTIN: I mean even Mikhail -

MS. RYAN: -- this -

MR. MARTIN: -- Gorba- -- Gorbachev came out saying, "Look" -

MS. RYAN: That's what I'm s- --

MR. MARTIN: -- "learn from us!"

MS. RYAN: That's what I'm saying.

MR. MARTIN: "We'll show you" -

MS. FINNEY: But I think -

MR. MARTIN: -- "what happens" -

MS. FINNEY: -- April's making an important point, because, you know, the Afghanis themselves have said, "Look, we'll wait it out, 'cause people come, and people go."

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. FINNEY: And we know that their participation is critical in this, so if *they* don't believe that we're in it, you know, for

the long haul, they're not going to be participating with us. We're not going to make the progress we need to make.

MR. MARTIN: But, Askia, a huge deal here is the left, the Democrats. They're saying, "Out! We want 'em out." African-Americans - no greater group against the war in Afghanistan. And so here you have a president trying to make a decision, and even his base is saying, "We don't want this to happen," but he knows it's a national security issue.

MR. ASKIA MUHAMMAD: Well, he's got the right wing as an issue. Afghanistan, of course, is the place where empires have gone to die. April mentioned Alexander the Great. The British, the Russians - they've all been defeated there, and, of course, the Afghans know [to] wait us out. Read Sun Tzu's book *The Art of War*, written 2,500 years ago.

Your supply lines are going to cause you problems. So, who's going to carry five days' supply of water up to these craggy mountains? You don't have goats. You don't have - your Humvees, your - your - your Bradleys are useless in that kind of environment, and people just wait you out, because you're going to get thirsty.

MS. RYAN: That's right.

MR. TRAYNHAM: And so, Roland, here are the realities. The realities are that when it's - when it comes to traditional warfare, we win, but this is not traditional warfare. These are insurgents in caves that're blowing themselves up, and that's

where we're losing. And that's where General McChrystal says, "Mr. President, these are the realities today. Please send 40,000 troops in" -

MR. MARTIN: But you -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- and the reason why [sic] is so that we can *train* these individuals, so that we can *get out*. So, there's a clear exit strategy. The point is the President doesn't agree with that exit strategy.

MR. MARTIN: But - bu- -- but also -

MS. RYAN: Well -

MR. MARTIN: -- but also, there's not one opinion. You have the former NATO commander -

MS. RYAN: -- that's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- who has a different view. You have other folks.

And so what this president is saying is, "You know what? The options you've given me" -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Are not good.

MR. MARTIN: -- "are s-" - "are not satisfying me."

MS. RYAN: Right.

MS. FINNEY: But remember that McChrystal's recommendation was based on, "If this is our goal, this is my recommendation." So, part of what the President's trying -

MR. MARTIN: So, the -

MS. FINNEY: -- is -

MR. MARTIN: -- goal is different -

MS. FINNEY: -- well - *exactly*.

MR. TRAYNHAM: And the President -

MS. FINNEY: I think that's part -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- needs -

MS. FINNEY: -- of what the President -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- to *define* that goal.

MS. FINNEY: -- but we have a -

MR. TRAYNHAM: He needs to articulate -

MS. FINNEY: -- very -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- that.

MS. FINNEY: -- there's a very interesting, new dynamic, though, that's been inserted. At the end of the week, we had the attorney general make an announcement about the terror trials that will now commence in New York. That's going to create a very different dynamic in the *public* sphere.

MR. MUHAMMAD[?]: It reminds them.

MS. FINNEY: It will remind people that we're talking about the people who blew up those two towers.

MS. RYAN: A- -- a- -- and -

MS. FINNEY: And where are they? They're in Afghanistan.

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's right. That's right.

MR. MARTIN: A- -- -- and, April, I think that really is the -- is the line the President must go on. He has to remind people.

Look. We have the Gallup poll that showed what? Some 51 percent of Americans don't want the President to send troops to

Afghanistan. Forty-four percent say they want to see the U.S. begin to reduce the number of troops there.

But the President has to remind America, "Hey."

MS. FINNEY: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: "Remember how you felt around 10 a.m." -

MR. TRAYNHAM: September 12th.

MR. MARTIN: -- "on September 11th?" "Do you remember how you felt? Do you remember when all you people were flocking to churches, praying" -

MS. RYAN: But, see -

MR. MARTIN: -- "left and right?"

But - but, again - but, you know, I think what is ha- -- look. We - th- -- we have what happened in Iraq, and people are not happy about war; but, again, when you remind folks, "You were *terrified* for your children," it causes them to say, "Oh. You know what? I" - "I" - "I kinda remember how that" - "how that felt."

MS. RYAN: The Bush administration at that time was able to play -

MR. MARTIN: Scared the -

MS. RYAN: -- on the -

MR. MARTIN: -- *hell* outta people! Let's just be honest.

[CHUCKLING.]

MS. RYAN: -- played on the emotions of the American public and went to Iraq, instead of going to the place where Osama bin Laden

was said to be.

And so *this* is the problem. People had enough of the dying and the death there, the money that was gone, the lives that were lost. And now we're going back to war again, after the - this president said, "I'm going to take you out of Iraq." The - the headline was buried. The headline was buried. He *talked* about Afghanistan, but he did not put it front and foremost, like Iraq: "I'm pulling out of Iraq."

MS. FINNEY: Actually -

MR. MUHAMMAD: Roland -

MS. FINNEY: -- I disagree -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- Roland -

MS. FINNEY: -- with that, because -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- Roland -

MS. FINNEY: -- actually, in 2006 -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- [crosstalk] -

MS. FINNEY: -- we campaigned -

MR. MARTIN: Karen and then Askia.

MS. FINNEY: -- on the idea that -

MS. RYAN: In *August*. He said -

MS. FINNEY: -- but in -

MS. RYAN: -- it in *August*.

MS. FINNEY: -- 2006 star- -- Democrats started talking about we need to, you know -

MS. RYAN: But the headline is -

MS. FINNEY: -- double down in Afghanistan.

MS. RYAN: -- "I'm pulling you out of Iraq." *That was the headline.*

MS. FINNEY: But we talked about -

MS. RYAN: You *talked* about it, but -

MS. FINNEY: -- [crosstalk] -

MS. RYAN: -- the head- --

MR. MUHAMMAD: This -

MS. FINNEY: -- Afghanistan.

MR. MARTIN: Askia?

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- this - th- -- this is an area of the world where you can't win by winning. That's the error in the -

MR. MARTIN: So, how -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- strategy.

MR. MARTIN: -- we define "win" is not how you're going to define it -

MR. MUHAMMAD: You're not going to -

MR. MARTIN: -- here.

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- you're not going to win by having an Appomattox court, or someone on the ship - on the Missouri signing a peace treaty - unconditional surrender.

MS. FINNEY: But that's not -

MR. MUHAMMAD: General Tojo -

MS. FINNEY: -- the definition -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- is not going to - he's not *in* this war.

MR. TRAYNHAM: You're absolutely right.

MR. MUHAMMAD: You can't win by -

MR. TRAYNHAM: You're absolutely right.

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- winning it.

MR. TRAYNHAM: But that's a definition of winning in the Middle East, and I - it's very simple. It's to prop up the Karzai government so they can govern themselves, and - whatever definition that is - one. But also, two, to make sure that they can defend themselves, meaning the Afghan -

MR. MUHAMMAD: But that - [crosstalk] -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- insurgen- --

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- the Karzai carte- --

MR. MARTIN: Here's what -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- the Karzai *cartel*, you should say.

MS. FINNEY: But that's not -

MR. MARTIN: -- but - and also - also, here's -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- also here's what General P- -- General Powell said. General Powell said, first of all, we have a soft base there. You have the corruption going on there.

MR. MUHAMMAD: Sure.

MS. RYAN: Right.

MR. MARTIN: He said he knows Karzai well, and they've made it

clear, "You must deal with the corruption."

But he also said you've got to confront what's happening on the border in Pakistan, what's -

MS. FINNEY: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- happening in Pakistan.

MS. FINNEY: Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: He said, so this decision is so much broader. So, when Senator [sic] Hillary Clinton went to Pakistan and made it clear, "Hey, we need you guys to step up," now all of a sudden they're saying it's not just the Taliban.

MS. FINNEY: 'S right.

MR. MARTIN: It's not just al-Qaeda. It's - it's those elements.

It's - it's Karzai. It's -

MR. TRAYNHAM: It's - [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- the people. It's Pakistan. It's a whole different ballgame than just -

MS. FINNEY: But it also -

MR. MARTIN: -- "Hey, send in troops. It's gonna be taken care of."

MS. FINNEY: *And* it has broader implications for our whole strategy in the Middle East, because Pakistan is connected to India, which is connected to the nuclear issues, with Iran. So, again, we can't just view this in isolation. We have to see it in the larger context.

MR. MARTIN: I also - you know, talking about ramifications in

terms of how - how some things could change, let's look at the whole issue of abortion in this healthcare debate. All of a sudden, we are seeing warfare breaking out in the Democratic party, and they're having to make a critical decision. Here's the party where pro-choice is in the plank of the party. They cut a deal on the House side, just to get healthcare through. All of a sudden, I'm reading pieces from Lanny Davis and others, who are saying, "Hey, sacrifice abortion for healthcare."

Karen, *what the heck* is your party going to -

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. MARTIN -- do?

MS. FINNEY: You know, I don't know. And I actually wrote a piece earlier this week about this, because I see this as more of a constitutional issue than, necessarily, just a woman's issue. And that is essentially what we're saying is that we're going to deny access, based on the feelings of a number of members of Congress, to a legal procedure for women. I mean it is not as though women are asking to have - you know, we're asking for something illegal. It's actually a procedure that is covered under the RNC's healthcare plan, interestingly enough.

So, you know, if we're going to say to women - the poorest women, who, frankly, will need this care the most - "You can't count on," you know, "this potential procedure," I think that - you know, there's a constitutional argument there to be made, that how can you deny -

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

MS. FINNEY: -- someone -

MR. MARTIN: I - I go- -- I get constitutional, Robert, but -

MR. TRAYNHAM: But - [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- Democrats are stuck, because you have women in the party who're saying, "You guys are now killin' us."

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: And all of a s- -- and this is where -

MS. FINNEY: It's not just women.

MR. MARTIN: -- and all of a sudden cou- --

MS. FINNEY: It's not just women.

MR. MARTIN: No- -- not just -

MS. FINNEY: It's a broader issue we should *all* be concerned about. [Crosstalk]- --

MR. MARTIN: But co- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: But - but the bulk of it -

MR. MARTIN: -- but it's showing the -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- is women.

MR. MARTIN: -- power of conservative Democrats, as well.

MR. TRAYNHAM: But, look. Republicans are sitting aside, eating the popcorn and saying, "They're eating themselves alive."

[CHUCKLING.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: And the reason why is because [sic] this is a conversation amongst themselves, and it - it's a circular firing squad, and they're firing amongst themselves. That's one of the

main reasons why [sic] a lot of intellectuals out there are saying - not even intellectuals; common-sense people out there are saying, "Republicans need to come up with a plan. They need to come up with some specifics."

Republicans are saying - I talked to a major -

MR. MUHAMMAD: Well, the Republican plan -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- I talked to -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- the Republican -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- major Republican senator the other day who says, "Why would we do something like that, when the Democrats continue to eat themselves [sic] alive?"

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- exactly. The Republican strategy was, "We'll vote 167 in favor of this abortion plank."

Nancy Pelosi should've never let a rule for that to be voted on.

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's a good point.

MR. MUHAMMAD: We've - and we all -

MR. MARTIN: But - but Speak- --

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- [crosstalk] - that point.

MR. MARTIN: -- but Speaker Pelosi, though, had no -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- 166 of 'em voted against the bill.

MR. MARTIN: -- but she had no -

MR. MUHAMMAD: They put a poison pill -

MR. MARTIN: -- she had -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- *no choice* [but] to let it go through -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- because the reality is this here: if she -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- didn't allow a vote on that, the healthcare bill was dead.

MR. MUHAMMAD: But - but they -

MR. MARTIN: They only got -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- put a poison pill on the bill. They voted *en masse*.

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. RYAN: The Democrats - the Democrats -

MR. MUHAMMAD: All but one -

MS. FINNEY: [Crosstalk] -

MS. RYAN: -- the Democrats -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- voted for the -

MS. RYAN: -- are willing to compromise on this. They're trying to - they're saying - who is the congressperson? They're saying that they want to basically add to the Hyde Amendment and get the person who is over in the Senate and bring it all together. It's all about -

MR. MARTIN: But, April -

MS. RYAN: -- but wait, wait, wait, wait, wait!

MR. MARTIN: -- here's - but here's the Democratic problem.

MR. TRAYNHAM: It's the poli- -- it's the -

MR. MARTIN: N- --

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- political - [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- yeah. But the - but the deal, though - the Dem-
-- you're asking the Democratic party to compromise on what many
consider to be the preeminent -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- issue in the party!

MR. MUHAMMAD: But - now -

MS. RYAN: Every year - every year --

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- now, Roland -

MS. RYAN: -- they vote on the Hyde Amendment. Every year, they
vote on the Hyde Amendment, and this is just an extension of it.

MR. MARTIN: I understand.

MS. RYAN: Eighty-seven -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- now what - what might ha- -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: Askia.

MS. RYAN: -- 87 percent -

MR. MARTIN: Askia.

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- what might happen -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: One second. One second. Askia.

MS. RYAN: That's w- --

MR. MARTIN: Asia, real quick.

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- what - what mi- -- what might happen is what I

heard John Conyers describe. He's been in many of these conferences. They get in these conference committees after the bill has passed both houses, and he said the lights go out. When the lights come back on, there're things put in the bill and things taken out of the bill -

MR. TRAYNHAM: Roland -

MR. MARTIN: *But* has- --

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- and nobody knows -

MR. MARTIN: -- but - but it has to -

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- and then - and that's the deal.

MR. MARTIN: -- get through the Senate.

MR. MUHAMMAD: And *that's* what the Democrats -

MR. MARTIN: Robert.

MR. MUHAMMAD: -- are counting on.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Well, a- -- from - from a tactical standpoint, the Democrats are negotiating with themselves. They are shooting -

MS. RYAN: No, it's not - [crosstalk] -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- they are shooting themselves -

MR. MARTIN: Yes, they are.

MS. RYAN: -- no they're not.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- the- --

MS. RYAN: Why is the President going on -

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- April!

MS. RYAN: -- Fox News and dealing with Major Garrett to try to get the Republicans -

MR. MARTIN: But - no. No -

MS. RYAN: -- to understand.

MR. MARTIN: -- no, no, no.

MS. RYAN: And they - and - and - no.

MR. MARTIN: The bottom line is -

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. RYAN: And the Democrats are trying -

[CROSSTALK.]

MS. RYAN: -- the Democrats -

MR. MARTIN: Final -

MS. RYAN: -- the Democrats -

MR. MARTIN: -- final comments.

MS. RYAN: -- are trying to jump onto the Ellsworth bill -

MR. MARTIN: Ten seconds.

MS. RYAN: -- o- --

MR. MARTIN: Ten seconds. Go ahead.

MS. RYAN: -- they -

MR. MARTIN: Robert.

MS. RYAN: -- okay, go ahead.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Healthcare will probably pass by a mark. It'll be a lukewarm version of a public option - bottom line.

MS. FINNEY: Healthcare should pass, and it should have a straight up or down vote. No excuses.

MR. MUHAMMAD: You can't get a straight up and down vote. It's already a flawed bill. It's a bailout for the insurance

companies, and it taxes the poor people and leaves 12 million still uninsured.

MS. RYAN: Amen.

MR. MARTIN: Sen- -- Senator Roland Burris said, "No robust public option? I'm not voting for it." Senator Lieberman said -

MS. RYAN: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- he's going to filibuster it. This whole abortion issue. It's a good possibility that healthcare could die in the Senate, and if that happens, trust me.

MR. TRAYNHAM[?]: Harry Reid.

MR. MARTIN: This president has a *serious* problem - and Harry Reid? Goodbye as Senate majority leader.

MS. RYAN: What happened to everybody being covered? What *happened* to that?

MR. MARTIN: Aw, that's -

[CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- so long ago!

MR. TRAYNHAM: April - April -

MR. MARTIN: Okay.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- April, that was - [crosstalk]!

MS. RYAN: Well, I'm old. I'm old, then. I'm old.

[CROSSTALK. LAUGHTER.]

MS. RYAN: I'm old.

MR. MARTIN: Okay. April, Ryan, Karen, Askia, y'all -
[crosstalk] --

[LAUGHTER, CROSSTALK.]

MR. MARTIN: -- talk in the Green Room.

Hey, folks, let me know what you think about our discussion. Do you agree, or disagree with the panel? Don't worry. These guys certainly can handle whatever you dish out. Post your comments at TVOneOnline.com, and don't forget to leave your name and where you live.

Next up, how is First Lady Michelle Obama's carefully crafted image faring with the American people? More on that later in our "Obama Watch" with Nia-Malika Henderson.

But up next, Americans look to Washington as unemployment rates soar to historic heights. Can Washington fix this problem? We'll find out when "Washington Week" returns.

[END OF SEGMENT.]

**(SEG-
MENT 3)**

MR. MARTIN: Welcome back to "Washington Watch."

So where are all the jobs? There's [sic] a lot of folks asking that very question, and our next guest, hopefully, has some answers. We welcome to the show Maryland Congresswoman Donna Edwards.

How's it going?

REP. DONNA EDWARDS: Great. Good -

MR. MARTIN: A- --

REP. EDWARDS: -- to be here.

MR. MARTIN: -- all right. Jobs [are] the big deal. Everybody's talking about it, and so here you have Democrats now talking about a job creation bill. But let's just be honest. What in the world can Congress actually do to create jobs?

REP. EDWARDS: Well, Congress really *can* create jobs. I think one of the things that we did in the stimulus package, you know, earlier in the year was get money out to - to states to try to stabilize the economy, and now it's time for us to really invest in not just creating jobs, but really creating jobs that are sustaining.

MR. MARTIN: But - it stabilized, but all of a sudden now, unemployment since that bill, unemployment has gone up. The number of jobs we've been losing every month [has] gone down. The latest report, 191,000 jobs lost. But the unemployment rate [is] now 10.2, the highest in 26 years. So, what did the stimulus bill actually *do*?

REP. EDWARDS: Well, let's keep in mind that unemployment - you know, unemployment has gone up. We expected that. We fully expected that, even with the implementation of the stimulus bill. Keep in mind also a lot of the stimulus money in the states hasn't been spent yet. In my own state of Maryland, we haven't spent all of the \$4.2 billion that we're projected to spend over 18 months. There's still a long way to go on this.

What we *do* know is that a year ago, we were losing 600,000 jobs a month, and now that's - that's down. Now, to be sure,

we've got to start creating some jobs, and so that's where Congress *does* come in. There's still additional investments that can be made in transportation and infrastructure, in really bringing some breath to this notion of green jobs creation. What does that mean? Where are we manufacturing? What's the new manufacturing for the twenty-first century?

MR. MARTIN: But you talk about creating these jobs, but even folks in the Transportation Department will tell you, "Look, healthcare is stopping any other kind of conversation from actually taking place." It seems as if that is the primary focus of the Senate and the House leadership and even the White House. And so if you have a Senate saying, "We're not going to vote on healthcare this year" - now it spills over to 2010 - when the heck are we going to see any movement on this particular issue? Because that is sucking up all of the time and the energy in D.C.

REP. EDWARDS: Well, first of all, the Senate actually *hasn't* said they're not going to vote on healthcare before the end of the year, and so I'm glad that the House has moved on our bill. We've moved it - moved the ball over into the Senate's court. And, you know, thankfully, the President and the Congress are actually capable of multi-tasking, and so we're going to get to job creation.

MR. MARTIN: Now, if the jobs come from transportation, what kind of jobs are we talking about? Because I've talked to different folks all across the country. They talk about the issue of

scale, the inability of African-American-owned firms to be able to become prime contractors, as opposed to being subcontractors. There's also an issue in terms of you look at some places like in Illinois, where people are saying, "Wait a minute. We have skilled laborers, but they're being locked out of unions," and so - "that's where the jobs [are] actually going."

And so how can people be assured that if the transportation bill goes through, if - if that's where we're going to see a lot of the jobs come from, that African-Americans are going to be able to participate in that job creation?

REP. EDWARDS: I think that's a great question. I mean I know that, as members of the Congressional Black Caucus - and the Hispanic Caucus, too - we've been really focused on making sure that those jobs go outside to not just the usual suspects. Again, in our - our state of Maryland, it's been a challenge. A lot of the requirements for the stimulus money, for example, were that we've got to get shovel-ready projects, get those contracts out and done in, you know, 90 days or so.

Those kind[s] of requirements mean that a lot of states are just going to the folks that they know. We have to open up that - that bucket and open up opportunities for minority, women-owned businesses to get - get some of these big contracts.

But there's also water and sewer infrastructure. Our water and sewer infrastructure around this country [is] falling apart. Now's the time to make those investments, because that's about

our competitiveness for the future.

MR. MARTIN: Well, I've actually talked to folks in all kind[s] of Black chambers of commerce over the last several months. In Greensboro, North Carolina; in Cincinnati, Ohio; in Houston, Texas - all around - and they're saying the exact, same thing in terms of the inability to be able to access those dollars. And so you can talk about the federal level. Once it goes to the state and local level, all of a sudden the problems become even more enormous. And so, hopefully, we can see some movement on that, 'cause folks need to eat.

REP. EDWARDS: Well, I - I agree. And as a friend of mine says, "It's not about the GDP; it's really about a j-o-b."

MR. MARTIN: Well, you got *that* right, 'cause the person at home [is] goin', "I don't know 'bout the GDP, GED - right. I need a j-o-b to get paid."

REP. EDWARDS: Exactly.

MR. MARTIN: Congresswoman Edwards, we appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

REP. EDWARDS: Thank you.

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. NewsOne.com's Smokey Fontaine is coming up next, and we'll tackle why it took so long to find out if the hero cop who really took down the Ft. Hood shooter was African-American.

**(SEG-
MENT 4)**

MR. MARTIN: NewsOne.com's Smokey Fontaine joins us now for our weekly "Web Watch" segment.

Smokey, what's hap'nin'?

MR. SMOKEY FONTAINE: I'm good. How're you?

MR. MARTIN: Doin' great. All right. Michael Steele on the show last week - *ma-a-an*, he got Black folks talkin' on the web. What's up?

MR. FONTAINE: Hey, you're the head of the Web. You've got your viral hit, Roland Martin, Michael Steele, all over the place - CNN, You Tube. Everyone's chatting about it, but you know what they're saying most? They're embarrassed. "We're embarrassed by the fact that Michael Steele, a Black man, head of the RNC, keeps putting his foot in his mouth."

MR. MARTIN: Well, actually, I don't think he put his foot in his mouth. He was being *honest*, and that's what we actually need.

Now, speaking of "honest," we initially had reports that Kimberly Munley, the fo- -- the officer down in Ft. Hood, she was the one who took down the alleged shooter who killed 13 folks, but the reality is now we're hearing, after "Oprah," it was a *Black* cop, Mark Todd, who was actually the hero!

MR. FONTAINE: Roland, this is like "Wag the Dog." We have the media putting out a Caucasian woman to try to take all the credit, but you know what? There's been a breadth of opinion about this online. Let me go to some member comments.

We had a brother from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, who said, "How can we be wrong for asking why the media propped up the White woman, when the Black man stopped the shooter? The media loves smearing the Black man's image daily, but refuses to get one, good fact about a Black man right. It's disappointing, and it's negligence."

MR. MARTIN: Wow! Strong, strong comment there. So, look, that was - that's really tough on - on that one.

But, again - I think, again, both of them are heroes. Both of them were involved in taking down this - this shooter; but, again, you gotta get the facts right. And so as we're hearing now, all of a sudden, that Mark Todd was the one who pulled the trigger, who kicked the gun away, actually handcuffed him and carted him off. And so, again, gotta give out props to Mark Todd for doing his job; and, hopefully, Kimberly Munley will also be well from her gunshot wounds she sustained as well.

MR. FONTAINE: Roland!

MR. MARTIN: Yeah?

MR. FONTAINE: The next topic f- -- hot topic on the web?

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MR. FONTAINE: I hear it's your birthday.

MR. MARTIN: Yes. I had a forty-first birthday yesterday and a big deal, and all -

[ROBERT TRAYNHAM ENTERS WITH A BIRTHDAY CAKE.]

MR. MARTIN: -- whoa! Smokey, I'm going to show you something.

Robert has walked in here with this nice cake.

Robert, is it chocolate, though?

MR. TRAYNHAM: Uh, you know -

MR. MARTIN: 'Cause I *am* a brutha. I do chocolate.

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- I understand, but it's breaking news. You know, thi- -- this is for you, Roland, because -

MR. MARTIN: [Laughs.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: -- right now, you are the center of the universe, and we wanted to all wish you a happy birthday. It *is* a little bit chocolate - little strawberry-chocolate.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

MR. TRAYNHAM: Okay? So, you - just so you know that. Now, what do you want for your birthday?

MR. MARTIN: All right. Here - you know what? Here's the deal.

I got a lot of stuff already, and so my favorite charity is the National Association of Black Journalists, and so - I'm - I'm on the board there, and so any - so, Smokey, if folks on NewsOne, TVOneOnline.com, if they want to do it, I say support our Black journalist organization. We're trying to train the next generation of Black journalists. So, they should go to TVOneOnline.com, go NewsOne.com, or NABJ.org, or even my personal site, RolandsMartin.com. We'll have the link [and] can actually - they can actually give to NABJ, because we need the next generation of Robert Traynhams, Smokey Fontaines and Roland Martins.

MR. FONTAINE: We'll do[?] it[?]. [Unintelligible] - use your birthday for that, let's donate and - and make you proud.

MR. MARTIN: Absolutely. Hey! And also, check this out. It's also [a] great birthday - November 14th - because Valerie Jarrett, senior advisor to the President -

MR. TRAYNHAM: That's right.

MR. MARTIN: -- same birthday. Condoleeza Rice, former secretary of state, same day; and also Whoopi Goldberg. So, I'm in the company of some fly women, Smokey!

MR. TRAYNHAM: [Chuckles.]

MR. FONTAINE: You are. Hey, it - it - it's good to be you right now. Live it up.

MR. MARTIN: All right - [unintelligible]. So, again, folks, go to TVOneOnline.com to give to NABJ.

Smokey, we'll see you next week.

MR. FONTAINE: Se ya then.

MR. MARTIN: All right.

Robert, thanks a bunch.

Folks, First Lady Michelle Obama came to Washington with a high likeability rating. So, why all of a sudden are her numbers falling? Politico's Nia-Malika Henderson next with some answers.

**(SEG-
MENT 5)**

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. She might be a favorite of magazine editors, but First Lady Michelle Obama is losing some

ground among Americans. So, what in the world is the deal?

Joining me now, Nia-Malika Henderson of Politico.com to explain.

All right. So, what's the deal? All of a sudden, the First Lady's approval numbers going up, going down, 48 percent during the campaign, goes up to 72 percent, now down to 61. What's the deal?

MS. NIA-MALIKA HENDERSON: Well, a couple of things are happening, one of which is this is a First Lady who came into the office with enormous expectations from a number of different women, whether it was Black women, working women, stay-at-home moms. And a lot of 'em are kind of disappointed with - with what they've seen so far. She's been, in some ways, a very traditional First Lady. She's talking about this garden a lot, but she's also talking about healthy eating and kind of softer - softer things, not, you know, kind of going at it in the way that Hillary Rodham Clinton did, or -

MR. MARTIN: Yeah, but is -

MS. HENDERSON: -- [crosstalk] -

MR. MARTIN: -- but it's not like -

MS. HENDERSON: -- kind of policy - [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- Barbara Bush or Laura Bush. They were just absolutely involved in all kinds of policy issues.

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah, they were - certainly behind the scenes.

And I think people expect that Michelle Obama is behind the scenes as well, talking to her husband, whether it's about, you

know, the Supreme Court nominations, or healthcare. And I think - you know, I mean you've seen the President's, you know, poll numbers drop, too; and, certainly, some of her dipping poll numbers could be a result of that.

Also, I think in the beginning, she had a lot of support from *Republican* women who liked her, and some of that is probably peeling off. So, that can kind of explain some of this dip in the polls.

MR. MARTIN: Olympics have anything to do with that? Because she was out front on the Olympics.

MS. HENDERSON: She was very much the face of Chicago's bid for the Olympics, so that could certainly explain some of this drop in poll numbers.

MR. MARTIN: Now, of course, people have focused on her clothes and all that kind of nonsense. Well, I just think it's, frankly, just one of the most - the dumbest k- -- you know, things people watch. Every time she goes out, "Hey, here's the hat!" "Here's the dress!" "Here's the belt!" "Here's the shoes" -

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.] Right.

MR. MARTIN: -- "she got on."

I'm like, "I don't really care!"

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah.

MR. MARTIN: What does she - w- --

MS. HENDERSON: Well, you don't care. Women -

MR. MARTIN: -- naw! I mean, look.

MS. HENDERSON: -- care, you know.

MR. MARTIN: I - I like dressin'. I don't mind that, but -

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: -- *gimme a break!*

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah, yeah.

MR. MARTIN: I mean she does have a *brain!*

MS. HENDERSON: She *does*. She *does*.

MR. MARTIN: Right!

MS. HENDERSON: Yes.

MR. MARTIN: But you - but what you have, though is the whole issue of - [in] terms of people focusing on that, but also, from her vantage point, and the White House, making sure that she doesn't make any misstep. We heard a lot of that stuff in the campaign in terms of how - recrafting her image - things along those lines. But why not let 'er loose?

MS. HENDERSON: Well, the thing is the f- -- the - the primary job of the First Lady is to help the President. The rule is, "First, do no harm." And the - the fear, really, is if she gets out there, she could damage the President's -

MR. MARTIN: But du- --

MS. HENDERSON: -- message and -

MR. MARTIN: -- but - but during the -

MS. HENDERSON: -- and policies.

MR. MARTIN: -- campaign, the President often said she was the closer.

MS. HENDERSON: No, you're -

MR. MARTIN: And I'll be honest.

MS. HENDERSON: -- right!

MR. MARTIN: I told the *President*, "*Dude!* She give a better stump speech than you do."

MS. HENDERSON: And, you know, she doesn't use a teleprompter, either. I was at the White House last week. She speaks -

MR. MARTIN: And she *killed!*

MS. HENDERSON: -- she does. She's - she's very good.

But I mean one of the good things about these poll numbers, even though it's 61 percent, if you looked at Hillary Rodham Clinton's numbers, her numbers were often very low, too. But she drove people to the polls. People were very passionate about Hillary Rodham Clinton.

MR. MARTIN: Oh, yeah. She drove -

MS. HENDERSON: And vo- --

MR. MARTIN: -- *Republicans* to the polls!

MS. HENDERSON: -- yeah, she - [chuckles] - did. Right, right.

But the net gain -

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. HENDERSON: -- was for Democrats, and -

MR. MARTIN: All right.

MS. HENDERSON: -- that's certainly what the -

MR. MARTIN: All right.

MS. HENDERSON: -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: Let's deal with this. Let's pull - pull the photo up. Pull the photo up. Right now, the President and all the talk in terms of his weight.

[SIDE-BY-SIDE PHOTOS OF THE PRESIDENT IN JANUARY AND OCTOBER.]

MR. MARTIN: I want to see the photo. This is sort of just nonsense. Is - so - so we've got the photo up there in terms of - now, Nia, let's talk about this photo. On the left, they're saying he was a thick-lookin' President.

MS. HENDERSON: [Chuckles.]

MR. MARTIN: On the right, he looks skinny. I'm sorry. He looks *skinny in both photos!*

MS. HENDERSON: Yes, he's a thin guy, and he often says that he's skinny, but he's tough.

I remember on the campaign trail, he lost some weight. He would pick up some weight, lose some weight when things got tough, and that's what you can see happening now. I think some of his aides are saying he's skipping - skipping meals. You know, a *lot* of people skip meals -

MR. MARTIN: So - so, what's with -

MS. HENDERSON: -- and -

MR. MARTIN: -- this story? Like, all of a sudden - [ominously] - "The President's losing weight," and stuff along those lines.

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah. I mean I think one of the things -

MR. MARTIN: It's not like -

MS. HENDERSON: -- that we see -

MR. MARTIN: -- he's eatin' soul food all day - all right? I mean he eats -

MS. HENDERSON: -- [chuckles] - right.

MR. MARTIN: -- a lot of healthy stuff.

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah - no, he - yeah, he does eat healthy, but he - you know, he likes his hamburgers every - every once in a while.

But I mean I think what you see now is a president who's clearly grappling with huge issues, primarily s- --

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. HENDERSON: -- this Afghanistan decision, and he's really, in some ways, you know, kind of becoming the *President*.

MR. MARTIN: Right.

MS. HENDERSON: I mean becoming the commander-in-chief. And I think it's probably showing - you know, showing up here -

MR. MARTIN: But you *know* -

MS. HENDERSON: -- [crosstalk].

MR. MARTIN: -- there's a Big Momma watchin', sayin', "We need to fatten that baby *up!*"

MS. HENDERSON: This is true.

MR. MARTIN: "We gotta send 'im some ham hocks" -

MS. HENDERSON: Yeah, some mac and cheese -

MR. MARTIN: -- "'n' gravy."

MS. HENDERSON: -- some - exactly.

MR. MARTIN: All right, Nia. We certainly appreciate it. Thanks a bunch.

MS. HENDERSON: Good to see you.

MR. MARTIN: All right, folks. If you ask someone White to tell you the political party of someone who is pro-life, against gay marriage, believes in a smaller government, is a fiscal conservative, and is a consistent critic of the policies of President Barack Obama, chances are they'll say he's a Republican. If you ask someone Black and throw in that the individual you're describing is also an African-American, chances are he'll be called an "Uncle Tom" or a "sell-out."

Welcome to the world of Michael Steele and ba- -- of Black Republicans. We interviewed Steele on this show last week, and *man* - folks sent in all kinds of hateful e-mails, on Facebook and on Twitter. *All because he's a Black Republican?*

There's little doubt the Republicans have ha- -- have had a sorry history with African-Americans for the last 40 years. The creation of a southern strategy by Richard Nixon, designed to exploit White fears about African-Americans in order to win at the ballot box, continued to deliver the South to the GOP well into this decade.

But, folks, the reality is that no political party should own a bloc of voters. And just as I have criticized White Republicans for not reaching out and engaging African-Americans on issues they have in common, Democrats should not get a pass

for their ability to depend on Black voters while throwing them under the bus when needed. Listening to one another and making a determination on what that person is saying, as opposed to depending on labels is vital.

The day African-Americans end the name calling and personal attacks will be a great one. Then we will have the chance to truly find out who a person is, rather than depending on silly labels that say nothing about who they are as a person and what they'll be able to accomplish.

That's my perspective. What's yours? Log on to TVOneOnline.com right now and share your perspectives.

We'll be right back.

**(SEG-
MENT 6)**

MR. ROLAND MARTIN: All right, folks. This week's feedback comes from a different type of viewer. [It] turns out the folks at Comedy Central are watching "Washington Watch." My interview with Michael Steele, chair of the Republican National Committee last week elicited this response from Jon Stewart of "The Daily Show."

[VIDEO CLIP FROM "THE DAILY SHOW."]

MR. JON STEWART: Comin' up, last week's elections. The Republican Party is *locked* in a search for its very identity, the upstart Tea Party wing prepared to challenge moderates in next

year's primaries. And then there's always the delicate matter of race - which is why Roland Martin recently broached with Republican party chairman Michael Steele *that very issue!*

[CLIP FROM "WASHINGTON WATCH."]

MR. MARTIN: -- I've always had is -

CHRMN. MICHAEL STEELE: Absolutely.

MR. MARTIN: -- Republicans - especially White Republicans - have been scared of Black folk."

[END CLIP.]

MR. JON STEWART: Wow!

[AUDIENCE LAUGHTER.]

MR. STEWART: Aren't we past that? I mean how do you even *bring that up* when you're sitting right across from a Black guy who's the top Republican? How can you even say it, Roland? *Steele!* Give 'im what he's got comin'.

["WASHINGTON WATCH" CLIP RESUMES.]

CHRMN. MICHAEL STEELE: You're absolutely -

MR. MARTIN: -- just[?] bein'[?] -

MR. STEELE: -- *right*. I mean I've been in the *room*, and they've been scared of *me!*

[AUDIENCE LAUGHTER, APPLAUSE.]

MR. STEWART: [Mugs for the camera.] Michael - Michael Steele, I - I don't think that they're afraid of you because you're *Black*.

[AUDIENCE CHUCKLING.]

MR. STEWART: I think they're afraid of you because of the stupid

- [bleep] - you say on television.

[LAUGHTER.]

MR. STEWART: No disrespect, but as far as -

[[AUDIENCE APPLAUSE.]

MR. STEWART: -- intimidating Black figures go, Michael Steele ranks somewhere between Urkel and the Muppet who sends his soup back.

[LAUGHTER.]

MR. STEWART: Now, as is standard procedure after Michael Steele has been near a microphone, the GOP went into Damage CON 3.

[JUMP TO CNN CLIP WITH SPLIT SCREEN OF ROBERT TRAYNHAM AND ROLAND MARTIN.]

MR. TRAYNHAM: If you take a look at what Chairman Steele, I think, is trying to do, he's trying to speak to the hip-hop community. He's trying to speak to the African-American community -

[END OF CNN CLIP.]

MR. STEWART: Yes, there's no better way to reach the hip-hop community than going on "Washington Watch with Roland Martin."

[AUDIENCE LAUGHTER. END OF CLIP FROM "THE DAILY SHOW."]

MR. MARTIN: Jon! I'm Generation X. I'm in the hip-hop community. We had Ludacris on the show as well, so check that out.

So, folks, what do you think about Stewart's comments? Does Steele's position as the head of the Republican National

Committee make you think more favorably of the Republican party?
Or, what about hip-hop? They can learn from this show.

Tell me what you think. Go on TVOneOnline.com and click on
"Washington Watch," and leave your comments.

That's it for this edition of TV One's "Washington Watch."
I'm Roland Martin. See ya next time - or, on Comedy Central.

Have a blessed week.

[END.]