

**Transcript of exclusive interview with Sen. Tim Kaine on NBC News' "Meet the Press with Chuck Todd."**

CHUCK TODD:

Joining me now is the Democratic nominee for vice president, Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia. Senator, welcome back to *Meet the Press*.

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Chuck, good to be with you, thanks.

CHUCK TODD:

Let me start with whether you believe this race is over. Your running mate, Secretary Clinton, said yesterday that she's done responding to Donald Trump on anything and then added, "As we're traveling in these last 17 days, we're going to be emphasizing the importance of electing Democrats down the ballot." Do you believe this election's in the bag already?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

No, neither Hillary nor I do. And if you look at our schedules for the next 17 days, you'll know we're not taking anything for granted. It's been a season of surprises. We like what we see now, we like the early voting activity and the absentee-ballot requests coming in in other states. But we are not taking anything for granted. We're going to hammer to do everything we can before the polls close the evening of November 8th.

CHUCK TODD:

Now I know I want to go to the emails, the hacked emails, WikiLeaks. And I know you guys have a blanket statement here, you don't want to respond to them because you don't believe that they've all been confirmed. But there has been, out of 25,000-some emails released, I think there's only been a dispute about two or three. Why shouldn't the public look at these WikiLeaks emails and have it be something that informs them about Secretary Clinton?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, you know, Chuck, again, these are connected to a Russian government propaganda effort to destabilize the election, to affect the outcome of the election.

CHUCK TODD:

But does that change what's in the emails?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

The motive for them is very, very important for Americans to understand, because this is near historic. And then the one that has referred to me was flat-out, completely incorrect. So I don't know whether it was doctored, or whether the person sending it didn't know what they were

talking about. But clearly, I think there's a capacity for much of the information in them to be wrong.

CHUCK TODD:

But as you know, I want to bring up a Politico story from earlier this week. The headline is, "WikiLeaks poisons Hillary's relationship with the left." "We were already kind of suspicious of where Hillary's instincts were, but now we see that she is who we thought she was," said one influential liberal Democratic operative. "The honeymoon is going to be tight and small and maybe nonexistent." Is it fair for progressives to look at these emails and have some doubts about Secretary Clinton's electioneering switches?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

I don't think so, Chuck. I think folks should look at this as a historic election. If we're able to win, it will be America, you know, moving one step closer to our equality ideal, making history, which is what we do when we do our best work. And that should be a cause for excitement. But look, we're all going to have to come together, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, because the nation has serious challenges that we're going to have to tackle together.

I was with Hillary in two great rallies yesterday, and she laid it on in terms of her own views. But she said, "But at the end of the day, if I am president, I have to be president for everybody, and we have got to reach out to everybody, to craft an agenda that will work in all parts of this country."

CHUCK TODD:

You know, it's interesting that you bring that up. And I heard her say that. She's also described half of Donald Trump supporters as "deplorable." She's also criticizing, for instance, Pat Toomey yesterday for supporting Donald Trump. Does that mean you're not-- if she wants to pledge to be president of all the people, but are you going to be able to work with Republicans who supported Donald Trump? Or when you campaign against Republicans who support Donald Trump, does that mean you don't want to work with them once they come to Washington?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

I think the best evidence of that, Chuck, is both of our track records. Hillary had a super track record as a senator, working on the Armed Services and other committees, working across the aisle. She also had that record as First Lady. And I'm really struck as a senator from Virginia, how many of my Republican colleagues talk up their respect for Hillary. And I know that that's the way she'll approach governing.

Of course, we stand with our teams during an election season. That doesn't surprise anybody. But after Election Day, the public expects us to reach across the aisle. That's what I have done in my career in Virginia and now in the Senate and that's Hillary's track record too.

CHUCK TODD:

Let me go back though to WikiLeaks and one on T.P.P. This one was allegedly from Ron Klain, who's been helping with debate prep, and it was about the T.P.P. flip-flop. And he says that she has to be for it, "She called it the 'gold standard' of trade agreement. I think opposing that would be a huge flip-flop. She can say that as President, she would work to change it. She can say that it can be better. But I think she should support it." Why shouldn't her new position on T.P.P. from the campaign be referred to as a flip-flop? Why isn't it a standard definition of flip-flop?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, look. I mean, I'll use my own example. I voted to give the president the fast-track ability to negotiate the best trade deal possible. But at the time I cast that vote in 2015, I said, "Look, I have a couple of concerns. And you've got to address these concerns, because I'm not guaranteeing I'll vote for it on the merits." The concerns weren't addressed. My concerns were largely around enforcement issues.

Hillary had the same view that there were a number of things in it that she liked, but other things she didn't. And as was the case, when she was a senator, remember, Hillary voted for some trade deals and she voted against others. If they didn't meet her standard of raising the number of jobs, raising wages, and focusing on the enforcement and national security angles, she'd vote against them. And her conclusion about the T.P.P., which is required to be voted on, up or down, no amendments, is that it falls far short of her standards.

CHUCK TODD:

Was it a requirement before you joined the ticket that you come out against T.P.P.?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

No.

CHUCK TODD:

It wasn't at all? Because you didn't come out as forcefully until after you joined the ticket.

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, it was because, look, we're still months away from a vote. I'll tell you where I was. I was in the middle of meeting with various groups about the final product. But I had put on the record in 2015 deep concerns that I had, especially about the enforcement provisions. Those concerns were not addressed.

And, you know, I tell you, the trade deals, if they're good enough, can be okay. But if you embrace a trade deal that's bad, you deepen people's skepticism about trade in general. And it's better to wait and try to find deals that meet your standards and not embrace deals that substandard.

CHUCK TODD:

You know, after the election, President Obama's going to be traveling overseas, probably talking up the idea of T.P.P. and an Asian trade agreement. If you guys are elected, will you pursue an Asian trade agreement, even if it's not the T.P.P.?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Hillary and I haven't talked about that question directly, Chuck. But look, we aren't against trade. We want to find export markets for American businesses because they'll be able to add workers the more they export. That's very important. And whether it's in Asia or in Europe, if we can find deals that meet those goals, more jobs, higher wages, and good for natural security, and good enforcement provisions, we're open to them. So no, you never close the door if you can get a deal that's going to be good for American workers and our economy.

CHUCK TODD:

So she could pursue a version of T.P.P.?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Again, we haven't talked about that in particular. We are not yet sure what the process is going to be for whether the Republican Senate and the House are going to bring T.P.P. up for a vote. We don't know what Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan are going to do. If I am in the Senate, I'm going to vote against it. So we have to wait and see what they do. But again, Hillary's laid out the standard. A deal has to meet three pillars, and if it doesn't, we can't support it. And T.P.P. doesn't.

CHUCK TODD:

You think it's going-- if you're elected, do you think it will be appropriate or inappropriate for you as vice president elect to still serve in the lame-duck Senate?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, it's pretty common for serve, at least during part of it. One of the issues that would be practical, again, we're not getting ahead of ourselves, I'm not assuming I'm going to win, but if I do, then the governor of Virginia would have to make a decision about who to appoint to replace me. And that decision isn't necessarily automatic. And so rather than leave a gap, where Virginia would only have one senator, I would want to at least serve until there's a replacement to be named.

CHUCK TODD:

I'm curious if as a Catholic, you were offended by one of the WikiLeaks that came out of, it was an email exchange that included the campaign spokesperson Jennifer Palmieri, one person wrote that-- referring to Rupert Murdoch, for instance, that they are both Catholic, that they are attracted to the faith because of the quote, "systemic thought and severely backward gender relations."

And then Jennifer Palmieri reportedly weighs in, "I imagine they think it is the most socially-acceptable, politically-conservative religion, their rich friends wouldn't understand if they became evangelicals." Did that bother you as a Catholic, Senator?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, you know, first, I don't know whether, you know, those folks wrote those emails or not, so I really can't comment on the attribution of them.

CHUCK TODD:

But a lot of Catholic-Americans have heard that. And some of them are offended by it. What do you say to them?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Here's what I say to them. Hillary Clinton's feeling about faith and about Catholicism in particular is most demonstrated by the fact that she asked me to be a running mate. And she described one of the reasons that she felt a connection with me was because of my own faith background, my missionary service in Honduras, and my Jesuit education, which she felt was a pretty close match in some ways for her Methodist upbringing. That is the most direct evidence about what Hillary thinks about Catholics.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, and one final question here, last week I asked Vice President Biden why the Obama administration wasn't implementing a no-fly zone over Aleppo, and I know Secretary Clinton endorsed the idea of a no-fly zone over Syria. Here's what the Vice President said to me, and I want to ask you about it on the other side.

(BEGIN TAPE)

VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN:

The first things first. We must defeat ISIL. D.O.D. has told us from the beginning that the assets we need to be able to do that would have to be diverted. We could not do both.

(END TAPE)

CHUCK TODD:

The Obama administration says both can't be done. Secretary Clinton believes they can. Why do you think the Obama administration is wrong?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Well, look, I'm a strong supporter of the President, strong supporter of the President. But since February of 2014, I've suggested that the United States and other nations should help implement

the U.N. Security Council resolution that was passed during that month to allow for the cross-border delivery of humanitarian aid to safe spaces in northern Syria.

I don't think it would be easy or automatic. And in that sense, I agree with Vice President Biden. But back then, I felt like if we didn't do it, we would see what we have in fact seen, which is a mass exodus of refugees from Syria that are dangerous to the refugees themselves and destabilize other countries. My concern is that if we do not do that, we will continue to see an exodus that will continue to cause a security challenge.

CHUCK TODD:

And very quickly, I meant to ask you this, there's a report over the weekend, AT&T is going to buy Time Warner, already some Democrats, including Al Franken are very skeptical of the merger, including Donald Trump as well. But Al Franken said, "I'm skeptical of huge media mergers because they can lead to higher costs, fewer choices, and even worse service for consumers." Are you a skeptic of this merger as well?

SEN. TIM KAINE:

I share those concerns and questions. We've got to get to the bottom of them. Generally pro competition. And less concentration I think is generally helpful, especially in the media. But this has just been announced, and I haven't had a chance to dig into the details. But those are the kinds of questions that we need to be asking.

CHUCK TODD:

All right, Senator Tim Kaine, the Democratic nominee for Vice President.

SEN. TIM KAINE:

Thanks, Chuck.

CHUCK TODD:

Thank you, sir. Thanks for coming.

SEN. TIM KAINE:

You bet.