

## TRANSCRIPT:

### Bernie Sanders meets with the Daily News Editorial Board, April 1, 2016

BY: Bernie Sanders, Daily News Editorial Board

PUBLISHED: *New York Daily News* Monday, April 4, 2016, 4:17 PM

**Daily News:** We are very well aware of the broad themes of your campaign by now. So we'd like to hone in on some of the more particular issues to get a sense of how your presidency might evolve.

You've said that the greed of Wall Street and corporate America is destroying the fabric of our nation. So if we can get particular: For example, in corporate America, Apple happens to be celebrating, today, its 40th birthday. It's a company that grew from nothing to 115,000 permanent employees. And I'm wondering, is Apple destroying the fabric of America?

**Bernie Sanders:** No, Apple is not destroying the fabric of America. But I do wish they'd be manufacturing some of their devices, here, in the United States rather than in China. And I do wish that they would not be trying to avoid paying their fair share of taxes.

**Daily News:** Okay. Well, would you name, say, three American corporate giants that are destroying the national fabric?

**Sanders:** JPMorgan Chase, and virtually every other major bank in this country. Let me be very clear, all right? I believe that we can and should move to what Pope Francis calls a moral economy.

Right now, there are still millions of people in this country who are suffering the results of the greed, recklessness and illegal behavior on Wall Street. And when you have companies like Goldman Sachs and many other major banks reaching settlements with the United States government, as you're aware, for many billions of dollars, this is an implicit admission that they have engaged in illegal activity.

**Daily News:** I understand that. I wanted to draw a distinction, though. Because in your speech you mention the financial industry and you focused on corporate America, the greed of Wall Street and corporate America. So I wanted to get a sense of corporate America, as the agent of American destruction.

**Sanders:** General Electric, good example. General Electric was created in this country by American

workers and American consumers. What we have seen over the many years is shutting down of many major plants in this country. Sending jobs to low-wage countries. And General Electric, doing a very good job avoiding the taxes. In fact, in a given year, they pay nothing in taxes. That's greed.

That is greed and that's selfishness. That is lack of respect for the people of this country.

**Daily News:** And so how does that destroy the fabric of America?

**Sanders:** I'll tell you how it does. If you are a corporation and the only damn thing you are concerned about is your profits. Let's just give an example of a corporation that's making money in America, today, but desiring to move to China or to Mexico to make even more money. That is destroying the moral fabric of this country. That is saying that I don't care that the workers, here have worked for decades. It doesn't matter to me. The only thing that matters is that I can make a little bit more money. That the dollar is all that is almighty. And I think that is the moral fabric.

To me, what moral is, I've got to be concerned about you. You've got to be concerned about my wife. That's moral to me. That's what I believe in. And if the only thing that matters to you is making an extra buck, you don't care about my family, I think that's immoral. And I think what corporate America has shown us in the last number of years, what Wall Street has shown us, the only thing that matters is their profits and their money. And the hell with the rest of the people of this country.

**Daily News:** Okay. Do you weigh in the balance at all, the fact that a company that's moving jobs overseas, that the competitive climate may be such that they feel that they must, to compete in the United States?

**Sanders:** No. I think, firstly, we have to appreciate these guys wrote the rules in the first place. So they wrote the trade agreements. And then, yes, I do understand you can make more profits by paying people in Mexico, or China, or Vietnam pennies an

hour, I do understand that. But I believe that people have...and, by the way, I'm not anti-trade. We live in a global economy, we need trade. But the trade policies that we have allowed to occur, that were written by corporate America have been disastrous for American workers.

So I think we need trade. But I think it should be based on fair trade policies. No, I don't think it is appropriate for trade policies to say that you can move to a country where wages are abysmal, where there are no environmental regulations, where workers can't form unions. That's not the kind of trade agreement that I will support.

**Daily News:** So how would you stop that?

**Sanders:** I will stop it by renegotiating all of the trade agreements that we have. And by establishing principles that says that what fair trade is about is you are going to take into consideration the wages being paid to workers in other countries. And the environmental standards that exist.

**Daily News:** So you're talking NAFTA. You're talking the Pacific. You're talking all of it.

**Sanders:** Yeah. Look, these trade agreements, let's be frank. Now, people may disagree with me, all right. My understanding, talking to many economists is, NAFTA, PNTR with China, other trade agreements have cost this country millions of jobs.

You go to Flint, Michigan, today. And everyone looks at Flint, Michigan today because they're seeing children being poisoned by the water systems. What people forget is that in the 1960s, Flint, Michigan was one of the wealthiest cities in America. Very prosperous city, because you had GM manufacturing plants there. That city is a disaster right now. And that is not just Flint, Michigan. It is cities all over this country have lost their tax base. They've lost their decent-paying jobs because of disastrous trade policies.

**Daily News:** Another one of your potential opponents has a very similar sounding answer to, or solution to, the trade situation — and that's Donald Trump. He also says that, although he speaks with much more blunt language and says, and with few specifics, "Bad deals. Terrible deals. I'll make them good deals."

So in that sense I hear whispers of that same sentiment. How is your take on that issue different than his?

**Sanders:** Well, if he thinks they're bad trade deals, I agree with him. They are bad trade deals. But we have some specificity and it isn't just us going around denouncing bad trade. In other words, I do believe in trade. But it has to be based on principles that are fair. So if you are in Vietnam, where the minimum wage is 65¢ an hour, or you're in Malaysia, where many of the workers are indentured servants because their passports are taken away when they come into this country and are working in slave-like conditions, no, I'm not going to have American workers "competing" against you under those conditions. So you have to have standards. And what fair trade means to say that it is fair. It is roughly equivalent to the wages and environmental standards in the United States.

**Daily News:** At what point in history, in the recent history of the United States, do you think the balance began to tip against the American worker?

**Sanders:** In the early '70s. I think it was in the late '60s/early '70s. I think Lyndon Johnson's, maybe even earlier than that, the victory over Goldwater, in '64 got the ruling class in this country very nervous.

And I think there became a very organized effort, on the part of corporate America, and very powerful forces, to say, "Look, we are in trouble. And we're going to have to fight back." And I think what you have seen in a number of ways, trade being one way, attacks on trade unions being another way, to really reestablish and strengthen the power of the few against the many.

**Daily News:** And do you trace all of that, do you ascribe, are those the forces in your mind that have led to wage stagnation since then?

**Sanders:** I think there's been a very concerted effort to take on trade unions. No question about that. You're seeing that every day, or in the last few years, in Wisconsin, what the governor there, Scott Walker, is about. That is a perfect metaphor for what I think corporate America...much, I'm not going to say all of, but much of corporate America has wanted to privatize everything that can be privatized. To destroy trade unions. To make it harder for people to get health care. To give tax breaks to the very wealthiest people in this country. Yeah, I think that has been a very concerted effort.

**Daily News:** Now, switching to the financial sector, to Wall Street. Speaking broadly, you said that within the first 100 days of your administration

you'd be drawing up...your Treasury Department would be drawing up a too-big-to-fail list. Would you expect that that's essentially the list that already exists under Dodd-Frank? Under the Financial Stability Oversight Council?

**Sanders:** Yeah. I mean these are the largest financial institutions in the world....

**Daily News:** And then, you further said that you expect to break them up within the first year of your administration. What authority do you have to do that? And how would that work? How would you break up JPMorgan Chase?

**Sanders:** Well, by the way, the idea of breaking up these banks is not an original idea. It's an idea that some conservatives have also agreed to.

You've got head of, I think it's, the Kansas City Fed, some pretty conservative guys, who understands. Let's talk about the merit of the issue, and then talk about how we get there.

Right now, what you have are two factors. We bailed out Wall Street because the banks are too big to fail, correct? It turns out, that three out of the four largest banks are bigger today than they were when we bailed them out, when they were too-big-to-fail. That's number one.

Number two, if you look at the six largest financial institutions of this country, their assets somewhere around \$10 trillion. That is equivalent to 58% of the GDP of America. They issue two-thirds of the credit cards in this country, and about one-third of the mortgages. That is a lot of power.

And I think that if somebody, like if Teddy Roosevelt were alive today, he would look at that. Forgetting even the risk element, the bailout element, and just look at the kind of financial power that these guys have, would say that is too much power.

**Daily News:** Okay. Well, let's assume that you're correct on that point. How do you go about doing it?

**Sanders:** How you go about doing it is having legislation passed, or giving the authority to the secretary of treasury to determine, under Dodd-Frank, that these banks are a danger to the economy over the problem of too-big-to-fail.

**Daily News:** But do you think that the Fed, now, has that authority?

**Sanders:** Well, I don't know if the Fed has it. But I think the administration can have it.

**Daily News:** How? How does a President turn to JPMorgan Chase, or have the Treasury turn to any of those banks and say, "Now you must do X, Y and Z?"

**Sanders:** Well, you do have authority under the Dodd-Frank legislation to do that, make that determination.

**Daily News:** You do, just by Federal Reserve fiat, you do?

**Sanders:** Yeah. Well, I believe you do.

**Daily News:** So if you look forward, a year, maybe two years, right now you have...JPMorgan has 241,000 employees. About 20,000 of them in New York. \$192 billion in net assets. What happens? What do you foresee? What is JPMorgan in year two of...

**Sanders:** What I foresee is a stronger national economy. And, in fact, a stronger economy in New York State, as well. What I foresee is a financial system which actually makes affordable loans to small and medium-size businesses. Does not live as an island onto themselves concerned about their own profits. And, in fact, creating incredibly complicated financial tools, which have led us into the worst economic recession in the modern history of the United States.

**Daily News:** I get that point. I'm just looking at the method because, actions have reactions, right? There are pluses and minuses. So, if you push here, you may get an unintended consequence that you don't understand. So, what I'm asking is, how can we understand? If you look at JPMorgan just as an example, or you can do Citibank, or Bank of America. What would it be? What would that institution be? Would there be a consumer bank? Where would the investing go?

**Sanders:** I'm not running JPMorgan Chase or Citibank.

**Daily News:** No. But you'd be breaking it up.

**Sanders:** That's right. And that is their decision as to what they want to do and how they want to reconfigure themselves. That's not my decision. All I am saying is that I do not want to see this country be in a position where it was in 2008, where we have to bail them out. And, in addition, I oppose that kind of concentration of ownership entirely.

You're asking a question, which is a fair question. But let me just take your question and take it to another issue. Alright? It would be fair for you to

say, "Well, Bernie, you got on there that you are strongly concerned about climate change and that we have to transform our energy system away from fossil fuel. What happens to the people in the fossil fuel industry?"

That's a fair question. But the other part of that is if we do not address that issue the planet we're gonna leave your kids and your grandchildren may not be a particularly healthy or habitable one. So I can't say, if you're saying that we're going to break up the banks, will it have a negative consequence on some people? I suspect that it will. Will it have a positive impact on the economy in general? Yes, I think it will.

**Daily News:** Well, it does depend on how you do it, I believe. And, I'm a little bit confused because just a few minutes ago you said the U.S. President would have authority to order...

**Sanders:** No, I did not say we would order. I did not say that we would order. The President is not a dictator.

**Daily News:** Okay. You would then leave it to JPMorgan Chase or the others to figure out how to break it, themselves up. I'm not quite...

**Sanders:** You would determine is that, if a bank is too big to fail, it is too big to exist. And then you have the secretary of treasury and some people who know a lot about this, making that determination. If the determination is that Goldman Sachs or JPMorgan Chase is too big to fail, yes, they will be broken up.

**Daily News:** Okay. You saw, I guess, what happened with Metropolitan Life. There was an attempt to bring them under the financial regulatory scheme, and the court said no. And what does that presage for your program?

**Sanders:** It's something I have not studied, honestly, the legal implications of that.

**Daily News:** Okay. Staying with Wall Street, you've pointed out, that "not one major Wall Street executive has been prosecuted for causing the near collapse of our entire economy." Why was that? Why did that happen? Why was there no prosecution?

**Sanders:** I would suspect that the answer that some would give you is that while what they did was horrific, and greedy and had a huge impact on our economy, that some suggest that...that those activities were not illegal. I disagree. And I think an

aggressive attorney general would have found illegal activity.

**Daily News:** So do you think that President Obama's Justice Department essentially was either in the tank or not as...

**Sanders:** No, I wouldn't say they were in the tank. I'm saying, a Sanders administration would have a much more aggressive attorney general looking at all of the legal implications. All I can tell you is that if you have Goldman Sachs paying a settlement fee of \$5 billion, other banks paying a larger fee, I think most Americans think, "Well, why do they pay \$5 billion?" Not because they're heck of a nice guys who want to pay \$5 billion. Something was wrong there. And if something was wrong, I think they were illegal activities.

**Daily News:** Okay. But do you have a sense that there is a particular statute or statutes that a prosecutor could have or should have invoked to bring indictments?

**Sanders:** I suspect that there are. Yes.

**Daily News:** You believe that? But do you know?

**Sanders:** I believe that that is the case. Do I have them in front of me, now, legal statutes? No, I don't. But if I would...yeah, that's what I believe, yes. When a company pays a \$5 billion fine for doing something that's illegal, yeah, I think we can bring charges against the executives.

**Daily News:** I'm only pressing because you've made it such a central part of your campaign. And I wanted to know what the mechanism would be to accomplish it.

**Sanders:** Let me be very clear about this. Alright? Let me repeat what I have said. Maybe you've got a quote there. I do believe that, to a significant degree, the business model of Wall Street is fraud. And you asked me, you started this discussion off appropriately enough about when I talk about morality. When I talk about it, that's what I think. I think when you have the most powerful financial institutions in this country, whose assets are equivalent to 58% of the GDP of this country, who day after day engage in fraudulent activity, that sets a tone.

That sets a tone for some 10-year-old kid in this country who says, "Look, these people are getting away from it. They're lying. They're cheating. Why can't I do that?"

**Daily News:** What kind of fraudulent activity are you referring to when you say that?

**Sanders:** What kind of fraudulent activity? Fraudulent activity that brought this country into the worst economic decline in its history by selling packages of fraudulent, fraudulent, worthless subprime mortgages. How's that for a start?

Selling products to people who you knew could not repay them. Lying to people without allowing them to know that in a year, their interest rates would be off the charts. They would not repay that. Bundling these things. Putting them into packages with good mortgages. That's fraudulent activity.

**Daily News:** All right. You say also that the big financial institutions and the wealthy have rigged the game against regular Americans. And you've also criticized Hillary Clinton for saying, "We just need to impose a few more fees and regulations on the finance industry."

**Sanders:** Yep.

**Daily News:** You've also pointed out her financial ties, if you will, to Wall Street. So given all of that, is Secretary Clinton trustworthy on this issue?

**Sanders:** Let me get back to your first point, about a rigged economy, which is absolutely what I have said. Thank you. You got my quotes right.

A rigged economy is about an economy, for example, where the wealthiest family in this country, the Walton family of Walmart, pays its workers wages that are so low that the middle class has to pay more in taxes to provide food stamps and Medicaid for Walmart employees.

A rigged economy is when you have corporations making billions of dollars a year in taxes, billions of dollars a year in profit, and not paying a nickel in taxes. A rigged economy is where you have companies able to shut down as a result of trade agreements that they have written, and move abroad and pay people pennies an hour. That is a rigged economy. A rigged economy is when, in the wealthiest country in the history of the world, the top one-tenth of 1% now owns almost as much wealth as the bottom 90%. If that's not a rigged economy, I don't know what a rigged economy is.

Now, Hillary Clinton, I'll let the American...I've tried to run a campaign, which is an issue oriented campaign. Where I have expressed my strong disagreement with Secretary Clinton on trade issues. She has supported virtually all of these trade

agreements. On how we raise money. I don't have a super PAC. She has several super PACs, which have raised a lot of money. She has given speeches to Wall Street.

I have not attacked her personally. I will let the American people make a determination about her trustworthiness. That is not an area that I'm comfortable...

**Daily News:** Okay. Let's take it out of the character question then. If you look at the facts, a rigged economy, Hillary Clinton saying that she would impose some fees and extra costs, and you finding that insufficient. And you're also saying that she has been taking money, including personal funds, from financial industry interests. Were she to be elected, do you think that the American people could have the expectation or the trust that she would be aggressive enough against the banks and financial institutions?

**Sanders:** That's a very fair question and I think the answer is they will probably have the expectation she would not be aggressive enough. Look, I will not shock anybody in this room in suggesting what everybody in America knows, that Hillary Clinton is the candidate of the Democratic establishment. Alright, you don't get \$15 million from Wall Street by accident. She is an establishment candidate. To my point of view, the terms of her issues and views are far, far preferable to any of the Republican candidates. But I think what she has basically said is, not to expect bold change from her. She talks about incremental change. I think that's a fair statement, is it not?

Alright, I believe that in the midst of the kinds of crises that we face with a disappearing middle class and massive levels of income and wealth inequality, the only major country on earth not guarantee to healthcare to all people, only major country not to provide paid family and medical leave, it is time to get beyond establishment politics. So to put your question in maybe a simpler way, is she a candidate of the establishment? The answer is, of course she is. That does not make her an evil person. I'm not judging her character...

**Daily News:** I wasn't suggesting that.

**Sanders:** I know that. But that's all.

**Daily News:** With a couple of those points in mind, there's a lot of speculation that if she were to win the nomination, would your followers and your supporters vote for her? Or would their absence in

the voting in November help whomever the Republican nominee is? Whether it's Trump or Cruz. With that in mind, and this might be putting the cart ahead of the horse a little bit, would you ever consider running as her vice-president?

**Sanders:** Well, I think you have put the cart ahead of the horse on that one. We're in this race to win. We think we've got a shot to win. And that's what we're focusing on right now.

There are millions of people. I am very grateful millions of people are supporting me. How they will vote, I don't know.

**Daily News:** But are you concerned? Not to interrupt you, about the specter of there not being enough support rallying around her from your camp?

**Sanders:** What I am concerned about, what I think would be a disaster for the United States of America, is to see a Donald Trump or some right wing Republican become President of the United States. I will do everything I can to prevent that from happening.

**Daily News:** Senator, I wanted to ask you. Because you've got this enormous support from young people, as President Obama did in 2008 and 2012. And you're promising a political revolution. But, if nothing changes in the Senate and in the House of Representatives, how are you going to be able to get anything done? I mean the real issue to me seems to be, what happens in the Senate? And what happens in the House of Representatives?

**Sanders:** Two things. We are talking about a political revolution and we are already delivering on a political revolution well before Election Day. What do I mean by that? What I mean is this country, and what I say in every speech that I give, no President, not me or anybody else, can do it alone. We need to revitalize American democracy, get people engaged in the political process, in a way that we have not seen for a very, very, very long time.

And the reason I say that, getting back to the questions right here, is, in my view, the powers that be in this country — Wall Street, large campaign contributors, corporate America — are so powerful, no President alone could do it.

So what we are seeing already, in this campaign, is, we have received over six million individual campaign contributions. That's a political revolution, you know that? That's unprecedented, I

believe, at this point in the campaign, in history. We are seeing...and when you talk about young people, please do not think that these are 23-year-olds or younger. In virtually every primary and caucus process, we have won the votes of people 45 years of age or younger. They're not just kids. And we're seeing, I think, a revitalization of American democracy.

I never believed that we could have voter turnouts higher than Obama did in 2008. Because I thought his 2008 campaign was one of the great campaigns in American history. And, yet, in at least five states, the voter turnout in this campaign so far has been higher. So we are striking a nerve. People want to get involved in the political process and I'm very proud of that.

Now, to answer your question. You can't look at politics as a zero-sum game, and say, "Okay..." First of all, if I win, it will almost by definition mean that there will be a very large voter turnout. That's what I believe. If there is a very large voter turnout, I think the odds are pretty strong Democrats will regain control of the Senate, do better in the House. Can they win the House? I don't know. But they will do better.

But more importantly, if I win, it will mean that millions of people now want to be involved in the political process in a way that has not previously existed. Every item that I am talking about on my agenda is, I believe, supported by the majority of the people in this country. My major job is to mobilize the American people to demand that Congress listen to them and their needs rather than just the big money interests. That's how you make change take place. For example, as you know, I've talked about the need to make public colleges and universities tuition-free. Do I believe we can deliver on that? Absolutely, because I believe that millions of young people and their parents understand that that's what we should be doing right now. And I think if Republicans or some Democrats want to vote against it, they will pay a very heavy political price.

**Daily News:** I want to follow up on something you've just said. I have heard very, very little in this campaign, about education. What do you think about that, considering what's going on in this country? But also very specifically there is a trend in this country of wealthy suburbs being better funded in education than urban districts. In this state,

there's even a lawsuit where the plaintiffs prevailed but nothing changed. What would a Sanders administration...

**Sanders:** That was the same thing with South Carolina, by the way.

**Daily News:** Yeah, I know. There's a few of them, but what would or could a Sanders administration do about this?

**Sanders:** We could do a lot. Number one, your point is absolutely right and I think there has not been enough discussion. I've kind of focused on, at the university level, public colleges, universities being tuition-free only, student debt. But your point is a very important point. There is a major effort for a start to privatize public education in America, which I think is a disastrous idea. I think we have got to adequately fund education. I think in the broader sense what we have got to do is make the American people understand how important education is to our quality of life and to our economy.

So what does that mean? It means that we have to start off with the lowest link. Right now, every psychologist in the world will tell you that zero through four are the most important years of a human being's life, alright? No debate, really. Our childcare pre-K system is dysfunctional. You've got teachers out there or instructors or somebody, I don't know what their title is, who make less than McDonald's workers. They have no benefits, they're making \$10 an hour. These are the people we are trusting with the youngest kids in America. That's insane.

**Daily News:** Okay, I'd like to switch topics here to...

**Sanders:** No, let me just say that I think education is an enormously important topic.

**Daily News:** No question.

**Daily News:** Can I ask one question?

**Daily News:** Yes, you may. Of course.

**Daily News:** Having lived in Vermont quite long myself and a fellow Vermonter.

**Sanders:** Where'd you live?

**Daily News:** Well, I have a place in Morristown.

**Sanders:** Yeah, sure.

**Daily News:** But when you were mayor of Vermont...

**Sanders:** Burlington.

**Daily News:** Mayor of Burlington, I'm sorry. I guess you're mayor of Vermont too. When you were

mayor of Burlington and you revitalized the city to what it is today and you had a lot of opposition when you became mayor. One of the ways you were able to succeed in making all the changes in a very pragmatic way is that you had a lot of grassroots organizations...

**Sanders:** That's right.

**Daily News:** ...that were able to put a lot of influence with local government.

**Sanders:** Yes.

**Daily News:** Is that possible to be able to do that at the federal level?

**Sanders:** Absolutely. And that's something I was just talking in response to your question. Okay. People say to me, "Well, Bernie, how are you going to bring about change?" You've got Mitch McConnell or Paul Ryan or whatever it is. Are they going to do the things you want? And the answer is no. But the way change happened in Burlington is we had tremendous opposition. By the way, I ran as an independent...it was mostly Democrats who opposed me at that point. We rallied the people in the city, the grassroots organizations. A year later, we won more seats on the city council to give us veto power. And mostly the Democrats understood that the sentiments were changing. They started working with me. That's what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is millions of people.

For example, let me give you just a concrete example of that, two examples. Right now, I gather yesterday it was, correct me if I'm wrong, the governor and legislature reached an agreement here for \$15 an hour minimum wage. Correct?

**Daily News:** Correct.

**Sanders:** Okay. Now if you and I were sitting here five years ago and I said, "You know, I think in 2016, there'll be a \$15-an-hour agreement," you would have said I was crazy, correct?

**Daily News:** I'm not sure.

**Sanders:** Many people would have. But what happened? What happened is a grassroots movement developed. Remember, the national minimum wage is \$7.25 an hour, it's a big jump.

**Daily News:** Yeah, right, it is.

**Sanders:** Okay. It happened because people stood up and fought back, alright? In the Congress right now, massive effort on the part of Republicans to cut Social Security, and some Democrats. I formed a

caucus called the Defending Social Security Caucus. They haven't cut Social Security. We rallied senior citizens. So to answer your question, that is exactly the model I am talking about.

**Daily News:** Okay, well, now let me...

**Jane Sanders:** We doubled voter turnout. I think it's important to...

**Sanders:** That's my spokesman.

**Daily News:** Good, thank you. So I want to focus you on some international issues, starting with Israel. While speaking forcefully of Israel's need for security, you said that peace will require an end to attacks of all kinds and recognition of Israel's right to exist. Just to be clear, does that mean recognition of Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state?

**Sanders:** Of course...that's the status quo.

**Daily News:** Okay. You've called not just for a halting construction of so-called settlements on the West Bank, but you've also called for pulling back settlements, just as Israel did in Gaza. Describe the pullback that you have in mind.

**Sanders:** Well, that's the Israeli government's plan, but I think that right now...I'm not going to run the Israeli government. I've got enough problems trying to be a United States senator or maybe President of the United States.

**Daily News:** No, but if you are President, you will, I assume, become deeply enmeshed in attempting the peace process.

**Sanders:** I assume that's something...

**Daily News:** And where you start on the negotiations is important.

**Sanders:** Here's the main point that I want to make. I lived in Israel. I have family in Israel. I believe 100% not only in Israel's right to exist, a right to exist in peace and security without having to face terrorist attacks. But from the United States' point of view, I think, long-term, we cannot ignore the reality that you have large numbers of Palestinians who are suffering now, poverty rate off the charts, unemployment off the charts, Gaza remaining a destroyed area. And I think that for long-term peace in that region, and God knows nobody has been successful in that for 60 years, but there are good people on both sides, and Israel is not, cannot, just simply expand when it wants to expand with new settlements. So I think the United States has got to

help work with the Palestinian people as well. I think that is the path toward peace.

**Daily News:** I was talking about something different, though. Expanding settlements is one thing; coming into office as a President who said as a baseline that you want Israel to pull back settlements, that changes the dynamic in the negotiations, and I'm wondering how far and what you want Israel to do in terms of pulling back.

**Sanders:** Well, again, you're asking me a very fair question, and if I had some paper in front of me, I would give you a better answer. But I think if the expansion was illegal, moving into territory that was not their territory, I think withdrawal from those territories is appropriate.

**Daily News:** And who makes the call about illegality, in your mind?

**Sanders:** Well, I think that's based on previous treaties and ideas. I happen to think that those expansions were illegal.

**Daily News:** Okay, so if we were to find Israeli settlements, so-called settlements, in places that has been designated to be illegal, you would expect Israel to be pulling them back?

**Sanders:** Israel will make their own decisions. They are a government, an independent nation. But to the degree that they want us to have a positive relationship, I think they're going to have to improve their relationship with the Palestinians.

**Daily News:** Okay, but I'm just talking about, you'd be getting involved in the negotiations, and this would be setting a benchmark for the negotiations that you would enter the talks, if you do, having conveyed to both parties, including the Palestinians, that there's a condition here that you want Israel to remove what you described as "illegal settlements." That's going to be the baseline. Now, if you're really...

**Sanders:** Well, there's going to be a lot of things on the baselines. There are going to be demands being made of the Palestinian folks as well. When you sit down and negotiate, obviously...

**Daily News:** And what are those demands?

**Sanders:** Well, for a start, the absolute condemnation of all terrorist attacks. The idea that in Gaza there were buildings being used to construct missiles and bombs and tunnels, that is not where foreign aid should go. Foreign aid should

go to housing and schools, not the development of bombs and missiles.

**Daily News:** Okay. Now, you have obviously condemned Hamas for indiscriminate rocket attacks and the construction of the military tunnels. But you've also criticized Israel for what you described as a disproportionate response.

**Sanders:** Yep.

**Daily News:** And I'm going to look at 2014, which was the latest conflict. What should Israel have done instead?

**Sanders:** You're asking me now to make not only decisions for the Israeli government but for the Israeli military, and I don't quite think I'm qualified to make decisions. But I think it is fair to say that the level of attacks against civilian areas...and I do know that the Palestinians, some of them, were using civilian areas to launch missiles. Makes it very difficult. But I think most international observers would say that the attacks against Gaza were indiscriminate and that a lot of innocent people were killed who should not have been killed. Look, we are living, for better or worse, in a world of high technology, whether it's drones out there that could, you know, take your nose off, and Israel has that technology. And I think there is a general belief that, with that technology, they could have been more discriminate in terms of taking out weapons that were threatening them.

**Daily News:** Do you support the Palestinian leadership's attempt to use the International Criminal Court to litigate some of these issues to establish that, in their view, Israel had committed essentially war crimes?

**Sanders:** No.

**Daily News:** Why not?

**Sanders:** Why not?

**Daily News:** Why not, why it...

**Sanders:** Look, why don't I support a million things in the world? I'm just telling you that I happen to believe...anybody help me out here, because I don't remember the figures, but my recollection is over 10,000 innocent people were killed in Gaza. Does that sound right?

**Daily News:** I think it's probably high, but we can look at that.

**Sanders:** I don't have it in my number...but I think it's over 10,000. My understanding is that a whole

lot of apartment houses were leveled. Hospitals, I think, were bombed. So yeah, I do believe and I don't think I'm alone in believing that Israel's force was more indiscriminate than it should have been.

**Daily News:** Okay. We will check the facts. I don't want to venture a number that I'm not sure on, but we will check those facts. Now, talk about Hamas. What is it? Is it a terrorist organization?

**Sanders:** Yes.

**Daily News:** Okay. Hezbollah too?

**Sanders:** Yes.

**Daily News:** Okay. Now switching more broadly to the Middle East and some of the other troubled areas, with ISIS. The Obama administration has been using this drone program, right? What are your thoughts on that, their use of...

**Sanders:** Well, first off, let me just talk about the Middle East. I talked about one of the differences that exists between Secretary Clinton and myself. I think we can argue reasonably that the most important and significant and far-reaching debate that we've had on foreign policy in this country in recent years was on the war in Iraq. Not only did I vote against the war in Iraq, not only did I lead the opposition to the war, helped lead the opposition to the war in Iraq, if you look at the statements that I made on the floor of the House in 2002, sadly to say, much of what I feared would happen actually has happened. Hillary Clinton's views were very different. She supported the war in Iraq.

Now, in terms of ISIS, this is a barbaric organization that obviously has got to be destroyed. But it must and can be destroyed without the United States getting involved in perpetual warfare in the Middle East, something that I fear very, very much.

So my view is that, very similar to what King Abdullah of Jordan said, that essentially the war against ISIS is a war over the soul of Islam. And the war must be won by Muslim troops on the ground with the support of the United States and other major powers. That is what I believe. And I think President Obama, who has been criticized roundly by Republicans and others for being "too soft," "too weak," whatever. In fact, that strategy is, under very difficult circumstances, actually beginning to prove to be a success. ISIS has lost about 40% of the territory it controlled in Iraq. We've seen the Iraqi army maybe, maybe God willing [knocks on wood],

show some fighting spirit, being able to take back Ramadi. And so, we've seen some success.

**Daily News:** Okay, while we were sitting here, I double-checked the facts. It's the miracle of the iPhone. My recollection was correct. It was about 2,300, I believe, killed, and 10,000 wounded. President Obama has taken the authority for drone attacks away from the CIA and given it to the U.S. military. Some say that that has caused difficulties in zeroing in on terrorists, their ISIS leaders. Do you believe that he's got the right policy there?

**Sanders:** I don't know the answer to that. What I do know is that drones are a modern weapon. When used effectively, when taking out ISIS or terrorist leaders, that's pretty impressive. When bombing wedding parties of innocent people and killing dozens of them, that is, needless to say, not effective and enormously counterproductive. So whatever the mechanism, whoever is in control of that policy, it has to be refined so that we are killing the people we want to kill and not innocent collateral damage.

**Daily News:** Okay. American Special Forces recently killed a top ISIS commander, after they'd hoped to capture him. They felt, from what the news reports were, that they had no choice at that. What would you do with a captured ISIS commander?

**Sanders:** Imprison him.

**Daily News:** Where?

**Sanders:** And try to get as much information out of him. If the question leads us to Guantanamo...

**Daily News:** Well, no, separate and apart from Guantanamo, it could be there, it could be anywhere. Where would a President Sanders imprison, interrogate? What would you do?

**Sanders:** Actually I haven't thought about it a whole lot. I suppose, somewhere near the locale where that person was captured. The best location where that individual would be safely secured in a way that we can get information out of him.

**Daily News:** Would it be in the United States?

**Sanders:** Would it be in the United States? It could be, yeah.

**Daily News:** Yeah. I mean, some of these places are lawless lands. You've got Libya, you've got Yemen. If Special Forces...

**Sanders:** If the question is do I believe that terrorists could be safely imprisoned in the United States, the answer is yes.

**Daily News:** Yeah. Okay.

**Daily News:** I have just a couple New York, quick questions. Will there be a New York debate?

**Sanders:** Well, that's a good question. If I have anything to say about it, there would. It's hard for me to imagine that somebody who was a United States senator here for eight years would not be willing to debate issues of importance to New York and issues of importance to the United States of America. So the answer is, we have asked for that debate. I think the staffs are talking. My understanding is that the Clinton people are kind of dragging their feet. So the answer is I would love to see a debate, yes.

**Daily News:** I know you've got to go in a second. When was the last time you rode the subway? Are you gonna a campaign in the subway?

**Sanders:** Actually we rode the subway, Mike, when we were here? About a year ago? But I know how to ride the subways. I've been on them once or twice.

**Daily News:** Do you really? Do you really? How do you ride the subway today?

**Sanders:** What do you mean, "How do you ride the subway?"

**Daily News:** How do you get on the subway today?

**Sanders:** You get a token and you get in.

**Daily News:** Wrong.

**Sanders:** You jump over the turnstile.

**Daily News:** We would like our photographer to be there when you jump over the turnstile.

**Sanders:** I'm like anybody when I...

**Daily News:** Returning to another New York issue. We're just a few blocks away from the World Trade Center.

**Sanders:** Yup.

**Daily News:** Down in Guantanamo, there's Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, the architect. I believe you're against the death penalty. Are you against the death penalty for him?

**Sanders:** Yup.

**Daily News:** You are. Why is that?

**Sanders:** Because I think the death penalty does not prove to be effective in stopping the crimes that we

want to see stopping. And second of all, at a time when virtually every major country on Earth has eliminated the death penalty, for right reasons. In a world of as much violence as currently exists, I don't believe government, our government, should be involved in killing.

**Daily News:** But you place Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, if you do, I'm asking, in the same moral basket as the street criminals under that...

**Sanders:** No. I place him as a murderous disgusting terrorist, and we have seen in this country terrible crimes have been...I don't need to explain to anybody in this room people coming out with automatic weapons and killing children in Sandy Hook. Disgusting crimes. I happen to believe that, in the long run, from a moral perspective, and from an effectiveness perspective, the death penalty does not work.

**Daily News:** But you would have no hesitation about killing him if a drone found him on a battlefield?

**Sanders:** Well, unfortunately we live in a...that's right. There is a difference. If I have you captured and I kill you, it's different than killing you on the battlefield. I think that is a very different moral...but if you're asking me am a pacifist, don't believe in killing people in war, that's not my position.

**Daily News:** So speaking of New York and issues important to New York and speaking of death. Last year, after the Oregon Community College shootings, you promised a comprehensive gun control agenda. When are we going to see that and what can you tell us...

**Sanders:** Well, I've talked about it, you have seen it. What the agenda is is very similar to where to where President Obama is. President Obama said at that Oregon speech..... with a great deal of emotion. That he thought this was an issue that's never going to be permanently solved. Nobody can guarantee that some lunatic is not going to pick up a gun today and kill people. But we have to do the best that we can to prevent those type of killings. And what we do, in my view, is significantly strengthen and expand the instant background check. What we do is do away with the gun show loophole, where people now are buying guns from unlicensed dealers. What we do is do away with the straw man provision, where you can buy a gun legally and then sell it to somebody who's a criminal. I think what we also is significantly expand

mental health capabilities to try to address the fact that we have thousands of people walking in this country today who are suicidal and homicidal. So I support pretty much the President's agenda.

**Daily News:** Just to be clear, the press release your campaign put out the day of that announcement of the forthcoming comprehensive plan, you made that announcement, those were the four points you made then. Have you moved any further beyond that?

**Sanders:** Well, I don't know that anyone has moved...I think that's the President's vision, that's my position.

**Daily News:** There's a case currently waiting to be ruled on in Connecticut. The victims of the Sandy Hook massacre are looking to have the right to sue for damages the manufacturers of the weapons. Do you think that that is something that should be expanded?

**Sanders:** Do I think the victims of a crime with a gun should be able to sue the manufacturer, is that your question?

**Daily News:** Correct.

**Sanders:** No, I don't.

**Daily News:** Let me ask you. I know we're short on time. Two quick questions. Your website talks about...

**Sanders:** No, let me just...I'm sorry. In the same sense that if you're a gun dealer and you sell me a gun and I go out and I kill him [gestures to someone in room].... Do I think that that gun dealer should be sued for selling me a legal product that he misused? [Shakes head no.] But I do believe that gun manufacturers and gun dealers should be able to be sued when they should know that guns are going into the hands of wrong people. So if somebody walks in and says, "I'd like 10,000 rounds of ammunition," you know, well, you might be suspicious about that. So I think there are grounds for those suits, but not if you sell me a legal product. But you're really saying...

**Daily News:** Do you think that the discussion and debate about what defines a legal product, what should be a legal product, hence AR-15s, these automatic military-style weapons...which is the grounds of this suit at the moment is that this should have never been in the hands of the public.

**Sanders:** Well, you're looking at a guy...let's talk about guns for one second. Let's set the record

straight because of...unnamed candidates who have misrepresented my views. You're looking at a guy who has a D, what was it, D minus voting record from the NRA? Not exactly a lobbyist for the NRA, not exactly supporting them.

But it's interesting that you raised that question. If you'll remember this, if you were in Vermont in 1988 [gestures to Vermonter in the room], three people were running for the United States Congress. We have one seat, Vermont. Two of them supported assault weapons. One candidate, Bernie Sanders, said, in 1988, "No, I do not support the sale and distribution of assault weapons in this country." I lost that election by three points. Came in second. And that may have been the reason, that I was opposed by all of the gun people, okay? So to answer your question, I do not believe, I didn't believe then and I don't believe now that those guns should be sold in America. They're designed for killing people.

**Daily News:** So do you think then, with that in mind, that the merits of the current case are baseless?

**Sanders:** It's not baseless. I wouldn't use that word. But it's a backdoor way. If you're questioning me, will I vote to ban assault weapons in the United States, yeah, I will.

**Daily News:** Two quick questions. One is your website talks about physical violence perpetrated by the state against African Americans.

**Sanders:** Yeah.

**Daily News:** It also says, "We need new rules on the allowable use of force." Such as?

**Sanders:** Such as do what many other countries are doing. Look, you've got somebody who's clearly mentally ill outside, right? Ranting and raving, and maybe they have a knife in their hands. Are there ways to deal with that issue other than shooting that person? We have seen instances in my own state, all over this country, where the way that was dealt with by killing that person. There are ways to deal with that. So I think what I am suggesting here very forcefully is that we have got to train police offices to use lethal force as a last resort, not a first resort.

**Daily News:** Okay. Last question. If you are elected, alums of James Madison High School will be atop all

three branches of the United States government, Congress, the Senate, the presidency, and the Supreme Court.

**Sanders:** Well, not quite the Supreme...

**Daily News:** Ruth Bader Ginsburg.

**Sanders:** Well, she is there, but she's not...she's like a...yeah.

**Daily News:** Yeah, no. So what happened? What has happened to education in America that James Madison High School is not that type of production line anymore?

**Sanders:** That's a good question. And with all due respect, you went to Midwood...

**Daily News:** No, I live in Midwood.

**Sanders:** Oh, you live in...

**Daily News:** Yeah.

**Sanders:** All right, all right. Midwood was a pretty good school as well.

**Daily News:** My daughter is in Bronx Science.

**Sanders:** Okay. First off, we still have some great schools. Let's not dismiss that. On the other hand, we have schools that everybody knows are drop-out factories, that are terrible. The answer to the question, I think, has to do with devaluing the role of education in our society. I was in Wisconsin just the other day, talking to teachers, and they said, if you can believe this, that young people do not want to become teachers anymore. Because especially in that state, teachers in public education have been so vilified.

Can you imagine bright young people not wanting to do the enormously important job of teaching? So we've got to change that culture. Teaching, education, is of the highest importance in this country. Teachers deserve to be well-paid, well-respected. When I grew up in that community, this was a community of immigrants, largely immigrants who understood the power of education. We had great teachers and we had great schools. I think we can do that again.

**Daily News:** Okay. Thank you very much.

**Sanders:** Thank you.