



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
Washington, DC 20463

October 5, 2012

BY ELECTRONIC MAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL
cmitchell@foley.com

Cleta Mitchell, Esq.
Foley & Lardner LLP
3000 K Street, N.W.
Suite 600
Washington, D.C. 20007

RE: MUR 6462
Donald J. Trump
Stewart Rahr
The Trump Organization, LLC
Michael Cohen
ShouldTrumpRun.com

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

On March 23, 2011, the Federal Election Commission ("Commission") notified your above-listed clients of the complaint in MUR 6462 alleging that they violated the Federal Election Campaign Act of 1971, as amended. On May 20, 2011, the Commission received the response submitted on behalf of your clients. The Office of General Counsel is presently reviewing this matter.

In the course of our review, we have identified the enclosed publicly available articles that may be relevant to the allegations in the complaint. See Attachments A-O. The Office of General Counsel has also reviewed the ShouldTrumpRun.com "Donate" function, which appeared on the website from approximately September 2011 until February 2012. See screenshot at Attachment P. These materials regarding your clients' public statements and actions are relevant to an assessment of whether, as alleged in the complaint, Donald J. Trump triggered candidate status by conducting campaign activities outside of the "testing the waters" exemption based on the activities of the website ShouldTrumpRun.com and a campaign flight taken by Michael Cohen, and that even if Mr. Trump is not a candidate, your clients violated the limitations and prohibitions applicable to "testing the waters" activities.

The Office of General Counsel is providing you with the additional information so that you may supplement your submissions by responding to it, if you so choose. Any response on your part is entirely voluntary. Should you choose to respond, please do so

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within ten days of receipt of this letter. We will thereafter continue our consideration of this matter based on the information available to us. This matter will remain confidential in accordance with 2 U.S.C. §§ 437g(a)(4)(B) and 437g(a)(12)(A) unless you notify the Commission in writing that you wish the matter to be made public.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (202) 694-1650.

Sincerely,



Mark Allen
Attorney, Enforcement Division

Enclosures
Articles
ShouldTrumpRun.com

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MUR 6462 (Donald J. Trump et al.)
Index of News Articles

- A. *Top aide heads to Iowa to plug for a possible Donald Trump presidential run in 2012*, NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, March 5, 2011
- B. James Q. Lynch, *Trump employee: U.S. needs his boss 'more than ever'*, SIOUX CITY JOURNAL, March 7, 2011
- C. Peter Hamby, *Trump aide grabs attention in Iowa*, CNN Politics, March 7, 2011
- D. Tom Beaumont, *Top Donald Trump aide in Iowa meeting with GOP leaders*, DES MOINES REGISTER Blog, March 7, 2011
- E. *Donald Trump Says His Interest in Presidential Run Is Not About Publicity*, ASSOCIATED PRESS, March 9, 2011
- F. Tom Beaumont, *Donald Trump will appear at Iowa Republican dinner in June*, DES MOINES REGISTER, March 23, 2011
- G. Michael Falcone, *Donald Trump's Political 'Pit Bull': Meet Michael Cohen*, ABC News, April 16, 2011
- H. Sheila Marikar and Rick Klein, *Is Donald Trump Back in the 2012 Race?*, ABC News Blog, May 23, 2011
- I. Peter Woodfield, *Trump May Run as Independent in U.S. Presidential Election*, Bloomberg News, June 20, 2011
- J. CNN Transcripts, *Trump On Downgrade*, CNN NEWSROOM, Aug. 8, 2011
- K. Michael Falcone and Jennifer Wlach, *Pro-Donald Trump Website Evolves Into 527 Group*, ABC News, Sept. 2, 2011
- L. Neil King Jr., *Trump Threatens to Spend Millions on a Presidential Run*, WALL STREET JOURNAL'S "Washington Wire," Nov. 22, 2011
- M. Sarah Maslin Nir, *Trump Quits G.O.P.*, NEW YORK TIMES, Dec. 24, 2011
- N. Huma Khan and Jennifer Wlach, *Donald Trump Staff in Talks With Financiers, Campaign Managers to Explore Third Party Bid*, ABC News, Jan. 30, 2012
- O. Ashley Parker and Trip Gabriel, *Trump Endorses Romney in a 7-Minute Appearance*, NEW YORK TIMES Blog, Feb. 2, 2012

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Top aide heads to Iowa to plug for a possible Donald Trump presidential run in 2012

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER
Saturday, March 05, 2011

Donald Trump's top associate is heading to Iowa next week to promote a potential presidential bid by the billionaire developer.

Michael Cohen, a vice president and counsel to the Trump Organization, said he planned to fly to Des Moines to meet with top GOP lawmakers, operatives and volunteers on Monday.

Iowa is to host the first presidential caucuses, scheduled for Feb. 8. "I'll be gauging the reception I feel he would have when he comes to Iowa," Cohen said.

Trump told reporters in Iowa this week that he would campaign hard in the state if he decides to enter the GOP field.

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"I will meet many, many people, maybe all of the people" in Iowa, Trump told The Des Moines Register. "If I decide to run, I will be shaking hands with everybody."

Trump has said he would decide by June whether he'll run.

Cohen is a co-founder of Should Trump Run, a website formed to boost interest and grass-roots support for a Trump candidacy.

"The man has proven experience, he is one of the richest men in the world, he has the most prolific name on the planet and his negotiation skills are second to none," Cohen said of Trump.

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Donald Trump has said that he will decide by June 2011 whether he will run. (Brandon/AP)

Attachment A

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Trump employee: U.S. needs his boss 'more than ever'

- [Story](#)
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Trump employee: U.S. needs his boss 'more than ever'

By James Q. Lynch Journal Des Moines Bureau Sioux City Journal | Posted: Monday, March 7, 2011 10:43 am | [1 Comment](#)

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DES MOINES -- Donald Trump didn't create the nations' \$15 trillion debt, but his business acumen and negotiations skills just might be what the country needs to change directions, according to an employee who hopes to convince his boss to run for president.

"We don't need more politicians saying the same thing over and over and over again," Michael Cohen, executive vice president and special counsel to Donald Trump, told reporters in Des Moines this morning. "What we actually need is a business person that can put this country back on where we belong and that is the path of prosperity. We've lost that."

Although he works for Trump, Cohen emphasized that he had taken a personal day to visit Iowa and was not here on his employer's behalf.

Cohen said he had a full day of meetings major Republican leaders, activists, advocates, operatives, fundraisers and "just about everybody." Before talking to reporters, he met with Republican Party of Iowa Chairman Matt Strawn aboard the Trump jet he traveled on. The flight was paid for an individual who hopes to encourage Trump to run, Cohen said.

It was the start of a busy day in GOP politics in Iowa. In addition to Cohen's visit, U.S. Rep. Ron Paul of Texas was to speak at the University of Iowa and Pella Christian School. Later, five potential GOP 2012 hopefuls -- Newt Gingrich, former Godfathers Pizza CEO Herman Cain, former Louisiana Gov. Buddy Roemer, former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum and former Minnesota Gov. Tim Pawlenty -- are scheduled to speak at the Iowa Faith & Freedom Spring Kickoff in Waukee this evening.

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Cohen, who planned to attend the Waukee event, hopes to use the information he gains to help convince Trump to join the race for the 2012 GOP presidential nomination.

Trump has indicated he will make a decision in June whether to run. His exploration of a candidacy began when his name was included in a poll of New Hampshire residents' preference for president.

Although Trump is not yet a candidate, Cohen and about 500,000 others who have indicated their interest at ShouldTrumpRun.com in seeing him run understand Iowa is the first step on the path to the nomination.

"Certainly along with the other 500,000, we are very anxious to learn about Iowa and be able to report back to Mr. Trump when he hopefully decides to run in June," Cohen said.

Running for president would be a "big personal sacrifice for him," Cohen said, but "the country really needs him more than ever before."

"Mr. Trump would be great" as president, Cohen said. In addition to that business acumen and negotiations skills, "Mr. Trump is one of the wealthiest men in the country. He's also one of the most well-known individuals on the planet."

"He's made a tremendous fortune for himself and what would be fabulous would be to see him put that ability and talents to work for the rest of us," Cohen said.

Cohen dismissed suggestions Trump would have a hard time being taken seriously as a candidate despite regularly being the butt of jokes by talk show hosts.

"As is President Obama, Mike Huckabee, Ron Paul, (Tim) Pawlenty, Sarah Palin," he said. "I believe they've all been made fun of. That's what the press does. They like to have fun with anyone and everyone."

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Posted in [Local](#), [Iowa](#) on *Monday, March 7, 2011 10:43 am* | Tags: [Donald Trump](#), [Michael Cohen](#), [Matt Strawn](#), [Ron Paul](#), [Iowa Caucuses](#)

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Trump aide grabs attention in Iowa

By: CNN Political Reporter Peter Hamby

Des Moines, Iowa (CNN) - Monday was already shaping up to be a busy day on the calendar in Iowa for political reporters, with six potential Republican presidential candidates slated to make appearances at various forums in the first-in-the-nation caucus state.

A press release on Sunday afternoon, however, added one more event to the daybook: "Michael Cohen, Executive Vice President and Special Counsel to Donald J. Trump, will hold a media availability at Signature FBO in Des Moines tomorrow morning at 9:15 a.m."



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Attachment C

Translation: An aide to Donald Trump will available in Iowa Monday to stir up even more 2012 buzz about the reality television star and business mogul. Bring your cameras!

Reporters - six or seven of them, at least - obliged.

Television crews were invited onto the tarmac of the Des Moines International Airport to film the arrival of one of Trump's private jets - the one with "TRUMP" emblazoned in giant letters across the fuselage - and grab some video of Iowa Republican Party Chairman Matthew Strawn boarding the plane to chat privately with Cohen.

After roughly five minutes, Cohen and Strawn then de-planed and parted ways. Cohen lingered to chat with members of the media about his day ahead, which he said featured meetings with "major GOP leaders, advocates, operatives, fundraisers, and just about everybody, I suppose."

Cohen claimed he was in the Hawkeye State not at the behest of Trump (though they work on the same floor in Manhattan and confer regularly), but rather on behalf ShouldTrumpRun.com, the presidential draft website Cohen launched with Stewart Rahr, another Trump booster.

Cohen said Rahr, the billionaire founder of pharmaceutical giant Kinray, paid for the flight to Iowa, though Trump was the one who granted him use of the plane.

"We do understand that Iowa is the first stop if anyone is interested in the presidential election," Cohen said. "We are very anxious to learn about Iowa and be able to report back to Mr. Trump when he hopefully decides to run in June."

Cohen insisted that Trump should be considered a serious contender should he decide to run, mainly because of his long and prosperous record in private sector.

"What would be fabulous would be to see him put that ability and talent to work for the rest of us," Cohen said. "The country really needs him more than ever before."

The prospect of President Trump has sparked a deluge of late night humor and eye-rolling by Beltway insiders. Cohen waved it off.

President Obama and potential GOP candidates like Mike Huckabee, Ron Paul, Tim Pawlenty and Sarah Palin "have all been made fun of" by comedians, Cohen said.

"That's what the press does," he said. "They like to have fun with anyone and everyone."

If he does decide to run, Trump's path to the GOP nomination would almost certainly be complicated by past breaches of party orthodoxy. He regularly attacked President George W. Bush during the last administration, and he has offered financial support to Democrats, including former White House Chief of Staff Rahm Emanuel in the Chicago's mayor race.

"Mr. Trump gives money to everybody," Cohen responded. "It's irrelevant as to whether or not it's Republican or Democrat. He is an individual who looks to individuals and not the party. There are many business deals he does that that requires."

Cohen said Trump contributed to Emanuel's bid in Chicago after being asked to do so by his agent Ari Emanuel, Rahm's brother.

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scendoff (29 Responses)

1. *T'sah from Virginia*

He should run as an Independent - since he gives to both sides!!!! Regardless as to how he RUNS - he will not beat President Obama in 2012!!!

March 7, 2011 12:27 pm at 12:27 pm |

2. *Martha in CF*

Mr Trump,

Please don't waste your time.....you can't run your own financial house. Please don't think you could run the countries. I would also hate to think that the White House would become celebrity status.

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March 7, 2011 12:31 pm at 12:31 pm |

3. *vic nashville tn*

Very good news I hope Trump will run

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Donald Trump Says His Interest in Presidential Run Is Not About Publicity

By Staff, Associated Press

March 9, 2011



New York (AP) - Billionaire developer Donald Trump denies he is using talk about a run for the U.S. president to generate publicity for his television show.

Trump, a Republican, told NY1 News that he plans to decide by June on whether to join the 2012 race.

In an interview broadcast Tuesday, Trump said that the "biggest negative" is that most people don't think he's serious about making a run for the job. But he said he doesn't need publicity for his television show, "The Celebrity Apprentice." He said the show got solid ratings for Sunday's episode.

One of Trump's top associates landed in Iowa on Monday for a series of meetings with key Republicans. Caucuses in Iowa typically launch the presidential nominating season.

Trump says his representative was "swamped" when he went to Iowa.

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Donald Trump will appear at Iowa Republican dinner in June

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MARCH 23, 2011 ET

Donald Trump plans to make his first Iowa appearance as a presidential prospect on June 10 as the headline speaker for the Iowa Republican Party's Lincoln Day dinner, state GOP officials told The Des Moines Register Tuesday. Trump's Iowa appearance is in part the product of the state GOP chairman Matt Strawn's effort to maintain focus on Iowa, whose influence on the early nominating campaign is undergoing renewed scrutiny.

The June event also underscores how the state party is inviting would-be candidates for individual appearances, instead of the multicandidate caucades of previous years. Trump said in a Des Moines Register interview this month he expects to announce his plans in June. Top billing for the leadoff caucus state's premier spring GOP fundraiser is expected to fuel speculation about the New York billionaire and reality TV star, just as word did last week when Trump announced plans for a June visit to New Hampshire, the leadoff primary state.

Strawn said he approached Trump during a trip to New York last month, after meeting him prior to the Conservative Political Action Conference in Washington, D.C. "When he decided to make a CPAC appearance and first started making rumblings of potentially exploring a presidential run, I thought, if that's the case, we need to reach out to him to headline one of our events," Strawn said in an interview. Strawn met with Trump and a top deputy, Michael Cohen, at Trump's Manhattan office on Feb. 22, the day before the Iowa GOP chairman appeared on MSNBC's morning cable news program to discuss early moves in the 2012 caucus campaign.

Trump committed during the meeting to the dinner, expected to be held in Des Moines. Although party officials had not yet announced a venue, they said it is expected to draw a crowd similar to the audience of more than 1,000 that turned out to hear former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin at the Iowa GOP's fall dinner in Des Moines last September. Trump told the Register he planned to campaign aggressively in Iowa if he seeks the 2012 nomination. The June 10 event comes just two months before the Ames straw poll, a party fundraiser at Iowa State University that also tests candidates' ability to turn out supporters.

The week after Strawn met with Trump and Cohen, Cohen visited Iowa to meet with Republican leaders. Cohen is co-founder of a website aimed at garnering support for a Trump candidacy. Trump plans to more announce his plans before attending the June 10 event, Cohen told the Register Tuesday. "Either he will be the keynote speaker as a candidate at the dinner or he will just be an honored guest," Cohen said in a telephone interview. "He's not going to make an announcement at the event. He will be announcing his plans before that."

The banquet highlights the different approach the Iowa GOP is taking to the 2012 campaign from four years ago. In April 2007, 10 Republican presidential prospects paraded across the stage at the Polk County Convention Complex, giving short speeches to the audience of activists. This year, Strawn has opted to hold events around the state featuring individual presidential prospects. Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour attended the first one last week in Davenport.

The shift was aimed in part at taking the focus off Des Moines and shifting it to county-level party organizations, plus drawing more media attention than a single event would. However, the party also has offered its bigger stages since the 2008 election to many presidential prospects, and offered invitations to others. Those who have headlined bigger state GOP events besides the chairman's new series include Barbour, former Massachusetts Gov. Tim Worton, former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney, former U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, Rep. Ron Paul and former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum.

"I think quite frankly it's more fair to the keynote speakers when they get the stage to themselves," Strawn said. "The campaigns really appreciate that approach because they're not just one of eight people who get seven minutes."

Attachment F



Donald Trump's Political 'Pit Bull': Meet Michael Cohen

By MICHAEL FALCONE (@michaelfalcone)

April 16, 2011

The man behind Donald Trump's possible 2012 presidential campaign is a registered Democrat who voted for Barack Obama in 2008.

Not only that, but Michael Cohen, an executive at the Trump Organization who doubles as Trump's chief political adviser, once volunteered for 1988 presidential candidate Michael Dukakis and worked for a Democratic member of Congress.

This election cycle is different. Late last year, Cohen co-founded the draft Trump website "Should Trump Run?" It has received more than 830,000 hits.

Cohen, 54, is known around the office — and around New York — as Trump's "pit bull." Some have even nicknamed him "Ten," a reference to Tom Hagen, the consigliere to Vito Corleone in the "Godfather" movies.

"It means that if somebody does something Mr. Trump doesn't like, I do everything in my power to resolve it to Mr. Trump's benefit," Cohen said in an interview with ABC News. "If you do something wrong, I'm going to come at you, grab you by the neck and I'm not going to let you go until I'm finished."

But since Obama's election in 2008, he said he has grown disappointed with the president, so much so that he now describes himself as "offended" by the administration's agenda. America, Cohen said, has become a "third-world nation," echoing words that have become a familiar refrain of Trump's.

"I thought it was the greatest thing ever," Cohen said he felt during the first months of the Obama presidency. "This fantastic orator was going to make a change in this country. He was going to do things that Bush clearly did not do."

His distaste for Obama, and Trump's professed interest in pursuing the Republican nomination in 2012, led Cohen, businessman Stewart Rahr and other supporters to create "Should Trump Run?" as a way both to spark — and gauge — interest in a

potential Trump presidential bid.

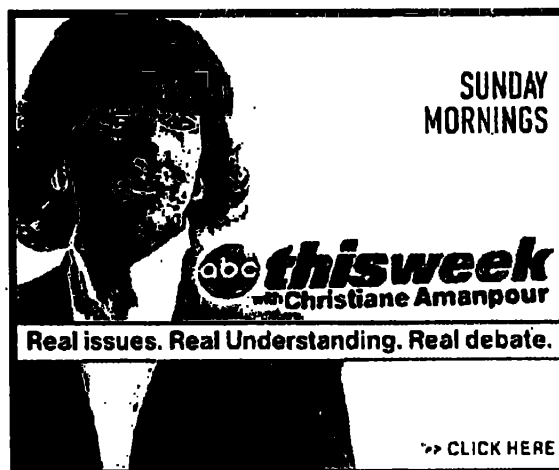
A lawyer by training, Cohen is Trump's special counsel and a juggler of people and projects. One minute he's on the phone with a reporter, the next he's giving orders to an assistant, and a moment later he's finalizing a deal on another line — and frequently, he's doing all three at once.

Donald Trump's 'Pit Bull'

With Trump stoking new speculation about his political ambitions every day, Cohen said "the phones have not stopped ringing, the fax machine is off the hook" and his email inbox is clogged. More than a few of those messages have to do with the issue that has catapulted Trump into the headlines recently — birtherism.

"I am certain that the president was born in Hawaii — I really am," Cohen said. "I am most irritated with the fact that this president has been exceptionally secretive when it relates to any personal documentation about his past. If you run on a platform of transparency, you should be transparent."

Cohen was the aide who flew to Iowa in a private plane bearing Trump's logo to meet with Republican



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Attachment G

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operatives there in March. He said he may make a similar trip to another crucial early nominating state — New Hampshire — in the weeks to come.

Roger Stone, a Republican consultant known for his controversial brand of politics, is long-time Trump associate and a cheerleader for his presidential run (albeit without Trump's blessing). In an interview with ABC News, Stone described Cohen as a "nice guy" and an "enthusiast" but lacking the political expertise to manage the growing interest in Trump candidacy.

"If you need brain surgery, you go to a brain surgeon," Stone said. "You don't go to a dentist."

A case in point, Stone said, was Cohen's one-day Iowa trip that led to questions about his role as both a Trump Organization employee and a promoter of his boss's potential presidential campaign — questions that he sought to answer by stating unequivocally that the trip and the expenses were paid for, not with any of Trump's money, but out of pockets of Cohen and Rahr, who made a fortune in the pharmaceutical industry.

Still, the trip triggered a complaint to the Federal Election Commission by a supporter of Texas Rep. Ron Paul, who alleged that the trip violated election law.

Cohen may be new to presidential politics, but he's not a total novice. In 2003 he briefly became a Republican to run for a New York City Council seat at the request of then-Gov. George Pataki. He lost that race to Democrat Eva Moskowitz by a wide margin. In 2009, he started a short-lived campaign for a New York State Senate seat, but dropped out of the race after a just a few weeks.

Michael Cohen and Donald Trump

By all indications, he and Rahr have more than enough personal wealth to finance the independent effort urging Trump to run. Cohen owns several residences in Trump buildings, including a home at Trump World Tower at United Nations Plaza, and Trump Park Avenue, just blocks from Central Park. His parents and in-laws have also invested in Trump properties in New York and Florida.

"Michael Cohen has great insight into the real estate market," Trump said of Cohen in a 2007 New York Post interview. "He has invested in my buildings because he likes to make money — and he does."

The feeling is mutual.

"I think the world of him," Cohen said of the billionaire real estate and reality television mogul who has said he will decide sometime before June whether to run for president. "I respect him as a businessman, and I respect him as a boss."

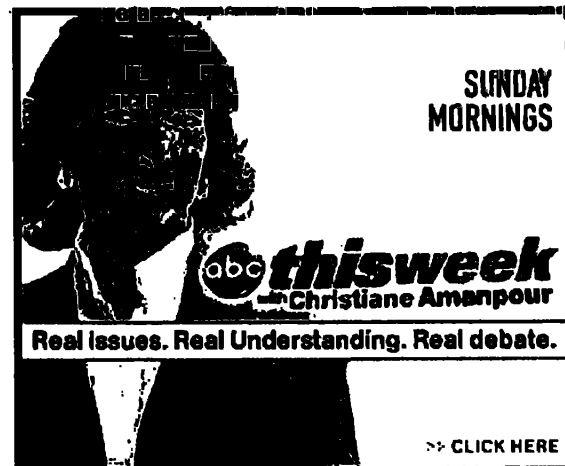
The two talk regularly — "I speak to him even more than I did before," Cohen said — and he has spearheaded a variety of projects for Trump, including sealing a business partnership in the former Soviet republic of Georgia, running a mixed martial arts promotion company called Affliction Entertainment and a firm that turns landfills into golf courses.

Cohen, whose position allows him to play at any of Trump's courses around the world, describes himself as a "decent" golfer and an avid tennis player. Much like Trump's, his circle of acquaintances include political leaders, actors and "super high net worth people," as Cohen calls them.

He only wears Dolce & Gabbana suits and Hermes ties. Even when he was a legislative intern for former Congressman Joe Moakley, a Massachusetts Democrat, Cohen says he was "always dressed to the hilt."

"It's very, very surreal," Cohen told ABC News. "I've been admiring Donald Trump since I was in high school." (He said that when he was a young man he read Trump's 1987 book, "The Art of The Deal" cover to cover — twice.)

Cohen grew up on Long Island. His mother was a nurse and his father was a surgeon who escaped a Nazi concentration camp with his family during World War II. He attended American University followed by law school and said he got his first taste of politics



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when he was a boy. A neighbor of his parents' invited him to walk precincts with New York Mayor John Lindsay in Atlantic Beach, Queens and Brooklyn.

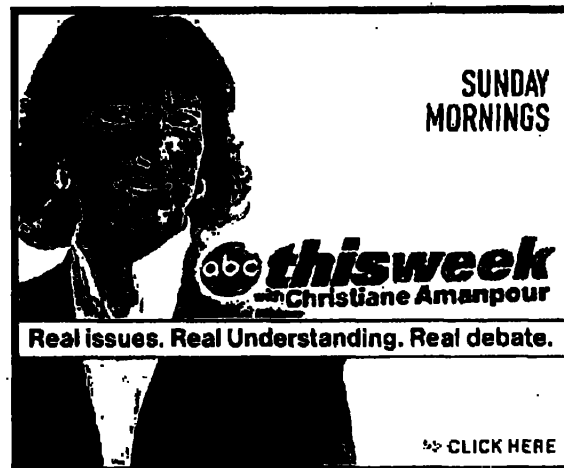
Donald Trump's 'Pit Bull'

Like Trump, Cohen has donated money to both Democratic and Republican candidates over the years, including Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz. He's hatched with Hillary Clinton and the late Sen. Ted Kennedy. Cohen said he and Kennedy even once went sailing near the Kennedy Compound in Cape Cod and later shared a lobster and clam bake.

After law school, Cohen went on to work at a personal-injury malpractice law firm in New York and later became a partner at the firm Phillips Nizer. He joined the Trump Organization in 2006 at Trump's invitation. He's married and has two children.

Cohen said he sees no conflict in his advocacy for Trump now and his past support for Obama. He said his concerns are three-fold: the "unsustainable" debt, the country's "ongoing and continuous" loss of jobs and the "basic overall lack of respect" that the rest of the world has for the U.S.

"I'm prepared to put the fact that I voted for Obama to the side," he said. "I'm more concerned now about my children, future grandchildren, nieces and nephews, and everybody's children and families. I'm more concerned about them than I am about party affiliation."



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USER COMMENTS

That expression on his face at that correspondents dinner is LOCKED into the minds of most Americans. It was simply priceless.

POSTED BY: JUDYNC | MAY 23, 2011, 9:45 AM 9:45 AM

Republicans have a problem. Here's Donald Trump publicly coming out (and on FOX no less), proclaiming that all the candidates suck. LOL! I tell ya...I still think Trump is a Democrat operative.

POSTED BY: MYTAKEONTHIS91 | MAY 23, 2011, 9:45 AM 9:45 AM

mytakeonthis, I've been thinking that also. Trump is like a continuous gift to Democrats and the President. He's almost, ALMOST, a better gift than Silly Sarah. Both of them are a gold mine for the President's re-election.

POSTED BY: JUDYNC | MAY 23, 2011, 9:51 AM 9:51 AM

He's a jerk! Why is he being given all this publicity? His show is stupid also...all has been and fighting and it's unreal. Get rid of it!

POSTED BY: BARRB | MAY 23, 2011, 10:07 AM 10:07 AM

What a coward,

POSTED BY: TIBB | MAY 23, 2011, 10:08 AM 10:08 AM

Don't watch CA but I would definitely vote for him to defeat BA, I will be 80 on 11/11/11 (Veterans Day) so pray a true American represent US.

POSTED BY: MARIE | MAY 23, 2011, 10:22 AM 10:22 AM

Just go away DNC plant so we can move forward. OK?

POSTED BY: LONGT | MAY 23, 2011, 10:29 AM 10:29 AM

Trump has out a deal with BB to just stay in the race, but not really in, to keep others from coming in the race, he's a joke! Even if he formally put his hat in he would pull out just before election, I wonder what his pay off is?

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Bloomberg

Trump May Run as Independent in U.S. Presidential Election

By Peter Woodfield - Jun 20, 2011

Donald Trump said he may run as an independent in U.S. presidential elections next year.

"I am considering doing something as an independent," the 65-year-old real-estate developer turned reality television star told reporters in Aberdeen, Scotland, today. He said he would make a decision after the 12th series of his show "The Apprentice" is completed. "There's plenty of time," he said.

Trump said last month he won't run for the Republican presidential nomination in 2012. He was in Scotland today at the start of a three-day trip to promote his new golf resort, whose course is scheduled to open in July next year.

Trump has considered a presidential bid several times in the past, including in 1999 when he formed an exploratory committee to consider running for the nomination to be a third-party candidate with the Reform party.

To contact the reporter on this story: Peter Woodfield in Aberdeen, via pwoodfield@bloomberg.net.

To contact the editor responsible for this story: Rodney Jefferson at r.jefferson@bloomberg.net

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Attachment I

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CNN NEWSROOM

Stocks Sink After Downgrade; U.S. Deadliest Day in Afghanistan; Investors React to U.S. Downgrade; Talk Back Question; Obama To Talk Downgrade; Trump On Downgrade

Aired August 8, 2011 - 12:00 ET

THIS IS A RUSH TRANSCRIPT. THIS COPY MAY NOT BE IN ITS FINAL FORM AND MAY BE UPDATED.

SUZANNE MALVEAUX, CNN ANCHOR: Top of the hour. I'm Suzanne Malveaux. Want to get you up to speed.

Investors are responding today to the U.S. credit rating downgrade by selling. Dow Jones stock now down by 306 points today. It is the first trading day since Standard & Poor's cut Washington's pristine credit rating. That has never happened before.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JOHN KERRY (D), MASSACHUSETTS: This is without question the Tea Party downgrade.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM (R), SOUTH CAROLINA: Now, the Tea Party has come to Washington talking about reducing spending. Thank God they're here.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SEN. JOHN MCCAIN (R), ARIZONA: By the way, on the U.S.P. thing, don't show the newspaper. Is there anybody that believes that that is wrong in their assessment of the fiscal situation of this country?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MALVEAUX: A brand new poll from CNN/Opinion Research Corporation shows an overwhelming majority of Americans, 75 percent, think that things are going badly in the country. Just 24 percent thinks that it's going well.

The White House is furious over the credit rating downgrade. President Obama is going to talk about it at the top of the hour from the State Dining Room. CNN will carry it live, along with analysis.

A NATO helicopter had its "hardest landing" in Afghanistan today, but thankfully nobody was hurt. The incident happened in Paktia Province in southeastern Afghanistan. It comes just two days after the Taliban shot down a U.S. helicopter, killing 30 Americans and eight Afghans. Most of the dead were on the ship U.S. Navy SEALs.

Navy seaman Craig Vickers, he worked with the bomb disposal unit.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ROBERT VICKERS, SON KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN: Craig talked about joining the military, and to serve his country. And for him it was God first, his country and family.

MARY JANE VICKERS, SON KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN: For all those that were on that helicopter, every life is important. Not only this incident, but all the ones before them.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MALVEAUX: The bodies of the dead Americans may be flown home as early as tomorrow.

Well, the Syrian military rolled into another town today to crush anti-government protests. The brutality followed similar attacks on two other cities this weekend. Both Saudi Arabia and Kuwait have recalled their ambassadors to Damascus. The Saudi king, taking an unusually harsh tone with an Arab state, called on Syria to halt its "killing machine."

In Texas today, a sensational hearing continues for polygamist sect leader Warren Jeffs. Now, last week, a jury found Jeffs guilty last week of sexually assaulting two girls. They were 12-and-15-year-olds at the time. And Jeffs has led a fundamentalist offshoot of the Mormon church since 2002. He faces the possibility of life in prison.

Well, you would be hard-pressed to find any happy people in Kemp, Texas, today. That is because the mayor has turned off the entire town's water spigot, and it's going to be 107 degrees this afternoon. The water will stay off much of the week so Kemp's water towers can refill. Persistent heat and hard dry ground keep cracking the town's water pipelines, which date back to the Great Depression.

Awesome. She has been in the water far more than 10 hours now. Diane Nyad, who is 61-year-old, is trying to become the first person to swim from Cuba to Florida without the protection of a shark cage. She says don't let her age fool you.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DIANA NYAD, SWIMMING FROM CUBA TO FLORIDA: I also wanted to be a woman for thousands, and I dare say, millions of people my age, who are going to look and say, 60? You know, the joke is 60 is the new 50, and it's true. We're a younger generation than the 80

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that went before us. And I want to be there to say we have many, many years of vitality and strength and service left in us.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MALVEAUX: Nyad tried to swim the Florida Straits in 1978 when she was just 28. Now, if she succeeds this time, she should arrive in the Florida Keys about Wednesday morning.

We want to take a closer look at the markets, whose stocks are down sharply following the U.S. credit rating downgrade. Now, this is the first day of trading since the decision by Standard & Poor's.

And I want to bring in CNN's Alison Kosik -- she's at the New York Stock Exchange -- and Ted Rowlands, who is at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Alison, I want to start off with you.

What's up with the Dow Jones right now? What are we watching? What are we seeing?

ALISON KOSIK, CNN BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT: You know, the good news is, the Dow is off its lows. We saw it plunge as much as 385. It's down only 316.

But I'll tell you what, don't think. This volatility is leading to wild swings of 100 points in a matter of minutes.

There's another factor affecting the trade today. The S&P also downgraded Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac and more than a dozen other federally-backed agencies. It doesn't come as a huge surprise, because Fannie, Freddie, and all the others, they are arms of the government. They rely on the government.

What it may do though is it may make it more expensive for them to borrow. Let me tell you what, U.S. treasuries, Suzanne, they are still in strong demand today. It's still seen as a safe haven.

Rates had been expected to rise because of the downgrade. We're not seeing that happening at this point, because the reality is, we may not be AAA, but AA-plus, it's still the second highest rating here. And the government didn't default, so it's going to be able to pay its interest on these bonds.

Ironically, we're not seeing panic in treasuries that some had expected, that so many people had expected. And even though stocks are sharply lower, we're not seeing any panic here either, even though we are seeing the Dow drop 315 points. It is orderly selling, it isn't panic selling -- Suzanne.

MALVEAUX: All right, Alison.

I want to go to Ted Rowlands at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.

Ted, what are you seeing there?

TED ROWLANDS, CNN CORRESPONDENT: Well, this is where those securities that Alison was talking about are bought and sold in terms of the treasury. And from the outset of the opening here in Chicago, people were flocking to U.S. treasury bonds. A lot of -- there was a saying that when the downgrade, oh, -- we were going to have this waterfall rate hike, and money is going to exit more for cars and homes, et cetera, et cetera. But that's just simply not happening. As Alison said, there's nowhere to park your money. If you don't want to be in the stock market, U.S. treasuries are still the safest way to go.

And we're absolutely seeing that play out here today. And analysts think that that will play out in the near future.

The only issue is, like Alison also mentioned, Fannie, Freddie, and the other agencies tied to the Fed, they are seeing a downgrade. You may see that at state and local levels, too. Municipal bonds could also be downgraded. That could cost taxpayers money, it could cost those local governments money.

The bottom line, though, at this point people are still flocking to the U.S. and spending their money buying treasuries -- Suzanne.

MALVEAUX: All right.

Ted, Alison, thank you so much, both of you, for putting this into perspective.

Here is your chance to "Talk Back" on one of the big stories of the day. Today's question: Does America need a liberal Tea Party?

Carol Costello, she is joining us from New York with more on that.

Carol, a very provocative question.

CAROL COSTELLO, CNN CORRESPONDENT: It's in spite of a lot of interesting conversation as well. Hear me out here.

American liberals are doing a lot of soul-searching right now. Many are furious with President Obama and say he moved to the right wing on budget cuts without getting tax increased in return because, I'm sure you've heard, Republicans won't even go there. CNN contributor Julian Zelizer says liberals need to play their trump card.

He says, "Democrats are frequently scared to say what a majority of Americans think. The public has favored raising taxes on the wealthy to help lower the deficit."

So, what to do? HBO host Bill Maher says liberals need a radical wing of their own called the Baner Party, named after the American pioneers who had to turn to cannibalism to survive.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

BILL MAHER, "REAL TIME WITH BILL MAHER": We need loudmouths and bad dressers who can match the Tea people maniac for maniac. You say no new taxes on the rich? We say tax the rich at 100 percent. Apparently, crazy is the new sensible, and we will not lose the war of bad ideas.

(END VIDEO CLIP) COSTELLO: On Keith Olbermann's "Countdown" show, former vice president Al Gore called the debt deal an outrage that threatened majority rule. If you believe that, he says, then you should rise up.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

AL GORE, FMR. VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES: We need to have an "American Spring," a kind of an American Tahrir Square, nonviolent change where people from the grassroots get involved again.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

COSTELLO: That, Gore says, would even the playing field. But is that really what America needs? Would an "American Spring" or a Donner Party just lead to more hyperpartisanship?

So, the "Talk Back" question today: Does America need a liberal Tea Party?

Facebook.com/CarolCNN. I'll read your comments later this hour.

MALVEAUX: All right, Carol. Thank you very much.

I want to go live to London. We're seeing some live pictures now, and we understand that these pictures are of groups of people who have been seen allegedly looting, believed to be related to the weekend riots.

We saw some pictures of looting, looting in stores, marking prices. All of this happened following about 100 people who were arrested Sunday night and early Monday morning in connection with violence that erupted over the weekend.

There were shots that happened on Saturday night in the city's Tottenham neighborhood, and had continued in isolated outbreaks elsewhere in the city on Sunday. The violence that happened on Saturday, it started in this ethnically diverse working class suburb north of London's center, and it started because of the shooting death on Thursday of a 29-year-old man.

And these shooting deaths are very rare in Britain, but a lot of people quite angry and upset, taking to the streets, expressing their anger. More than 100 people Sunday night and early Monday being arrested.

It looks like things might be heating up on the streets of London again, as we take a look at these live pictures. We'll bring that to you. Oh, it looks now as if you are seeing some of the police almost shooting -- you see a group of people that are actually moving and running.

We're going to try and get more information on what we're actually watching out of London as some violent protests seem to be emerging, and following 100 people arrested over the weekend.

We're going to take a quick break and sort out these pictures. (COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MALVEAUX: You are looking at the flame of some of the helicopter's fuel tank. Thirty U.S. troops were among 38 people killed when a transport helicopter went down in Afghanistan.

Most of the Americans were elite Navy SEALs on their way to help fellow troops during a heavy firefight. It was the deadliest incident for U.S. forces in the decade-long war.

Well, today, family members are mourning their loss and praising their courage.

Our Brian Todd reports on the heartbreak in a family and a community.

(BEGIN VIDEOTAPE)

BRIAN TODD, CNN CORRESPONDENT (voice-over): Kimberly Vaughn describes that horrible moment when uniformed officers came to her door and told her about her husband.

KIMBERLY VAUGHN, HUSBAND KILLED IN AFGHANISTAN CRASH: And I just fell to my knees.

TODD: Arson Carson Vaughn was one of 22 Navy SEALs killed in the helicopter crash in Afghanistan. Kimberly is now left to care for 2-month-old daughter Chamberlin (ph) and son Reagan (ph), who turns 2 years old next month.

VAUGHN: I want to tell the world that he was an amazing man, that he was a wonderful husband and a fabulous father to two wonderful children. And he was a warrior for our country, and he wouldn't want to leave his earth any braver way than how he did.

TODD: On the beach, in the shadow of the Vaughn's newly selected hometown of Virginia Beach, a community grieves for nearly two dozen young men who were in their raid, but who they never really got to know. Mary's Restaurant is a hangout for some of the SEALs based near Virginia Beach.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: You feel like you're at rock bottom again. You just feel like you're not succeeding at what needs to be done. And you have to ask is it worth it, is another life worth it?

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: It's a grave loss, and we're very sad. Very sad day.

TODD: These were warriors, elite commandos who could never reveal what they did to these neighbors.

(on camera): Still, people here feel a close bond with the SEALs. And in only about 13 weeks, this community has gone from the triumph of the killing of Osama Bin Laden to what now appears to be the biggest single loss of life in SEAL history. (voice-over): Virginia Beach Mayor Will Sessoms wanted to throw a parade for the SEALs after the Bin Laden raid, but knew he couldn't. Now, he's got to hold an entire city's grief for a group of young men whose names they may be hearing for the first time.

MAYOR WILLIAM SESSOMS, VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA: It hurts and, you know, but it's a shared pain, which means that everyone thinks so highly of them.

TODD: John McGuire knows all about that shared pain. He was a SEAL for 10 years, stationed near Virginia Beach.

(on camera): Is there any survivor's guilt among current or former SEALs when something like this happened?

JOHN MCGUIRE, FORMER NAVY SEAL: I think former SEALs like myself and all SEALs go through all the emotions. But, you know, we are at war and freedom isn't free. And these guys, I guarantee every one of them, if they had a chance they would do it all again.

TODD (voice-over): Now the focus turns toward helping the families. Current and former Navy SEALs and their commanders will be trying to raise money for the Navy SEAL Foundation, a group dedicated to giving financial support to those left behind.

(END VIDEOTAPE)

MALVEAUX: Our own CNN's Brian Todd joins us from Norfolk, Virginia.

And Brian, the loss of every trooper's life is equally tragic, but the impact of losing so many in one day has attracted more attention.

Can you put this into perspective for us? What does this mean for the military community?

TODD: Well, sure, for the community around here it's devastating, it's emotionally painful.

You talk to military members, their families, family members of the SEALs, it is a huge, huge loss. It's just starting to sink in for many of them.

As for the actual effect on the force, that's also very painful, because I talked to a former Navy SEAL just a short time ago, and he said, "Look, the SEALs are not a large force. They don't deploy in large numbers."

This will have a big impact on their forces right now. The loss of 22 all at once, that's a big blow. But he said that, possibly, with the drawdown of troops in Iraq, then some SEALs who are serving there could be redeployed to Afghanistan.

He says that's likely what they're going to have to do, at least in the short term. But he says it's not easy to fill the SEALs ranks. He said every year, about 200 guys try out for it and only about 20 of them make it. So you get a sense of how hard it is to fill those ranks.

MALVEAUX: Brian, I'm going to go to Afghanistan for the 10th anniversary of the September 11th attacks. And the military's focus has been on bringing American soldiers home and training the Afghans to take over.

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Does this incident make those who you've talked to less confident in that mission?

TODD: Well, some of the citizens, the civilians in this area, kind of question that, and question what it's going to be like when U.S. forces leave. And are the Afghans going to be up to the task? That's kind of an ongoing issue here, and wondering whether that's going to come to pass the way U.S. leaders hope it will.

But as far as the mission itself, if you talk to military people who are actually deployed on the mission, they are confident in the Afghans, they're confident in being able to carry out their mission, of course, for the duration. It's kind of a different perspective you get between civilians who are kind of wishing it and military members who are living part in it.

MALVEAUX: All right. Brian Todd, thank you very much. We wish the military community and their families our condolences and the very best to them.

Well, the U.S. downgrade ripples around the world. We're going to check on the international markets up next.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MALVEAUX: We're keeping an eye on two developing stories. One, of course, the stock markets and how they are reacting to the credit downgrade throughout the world.

We're also focusing on live pictures here. These pictures out of London. Potentially more violence and a standoff between police on the streets and protesters.

This involves police in London who arrested more than 100 people Sunday night, going into early morning. These protests erupted into riots on Saturday night in the city's Tottenham neighborhood.

The reason behind this is that there was a shooting death of a 29-year-old man, and people in the neighborhood believe that police shot him unjustly; that the riots took place because this young man was scared inside of a cab, that that cab was stopped by the police in some sort of attempt to arrest the individual. And shots were fired, and people in the neighborhood say that the police held down this 29-year-old man and shot him in the head. And the police have denied this; but this has caused a lot of anger and consternation in this particular part of London, and in this ethnically diverse neighborhood. These are some who people believe that it was racially motivated.

So we're watching as people begin to gather again in the streets of London. And riot police, as you can see, holding their batons and their shields, waiting to see what happens next.

You can see one of these riot police approaching someone. I see protesters there. We see a gentleman who is in yellow, and the police approaching him. But it looks like really kind of a standoff situation, not a lot of activity yet, but a very tense situation in that part of London because of the death of that 29-year-old man and if some unusual circumstances, some people believe in the neighborhood, and the riots that ensued were the watershed, leading to more than 100 people arrested within a 24-hour period of time.

We're going to keep watching what takes place here. Obviously, a very tense situation as the police stand there and wait to see what develops next, what happens next. And we are going to keep a close eye on those pictures and bring more information to you if there are further developments.

We're also watching the markets, where stocks are down sharply. This is the first day of trading since the decision by Standard & Poor's to downgrade the U.S. credit rating. The Dow Jones, now down by 317 points or so.

We are also awaiting the president. In about 30 minutes, just over 30 minutes, he's going to make a presidential statement in the State Dining Room at the White House. He's going to be addressing a lot of the concerns that people have about what is taking place, the economic crisis, the downgrade in credit, what is happening in the world markets, their response to this.

Fairly sure that the U.S. is being downgraded today as well. And where does the country go from here? How does the government and how do individuals -- how are they impacted on all of this when it comes to home loans, mortgages, the price just to borrow money, the interest rates, the value of the dollar, as well as U.S. credibility around the world because of this unprecedented move at Standard & Poor's, downgrading U.S. credit, and the fallout from that.

So we're keeping a close eye on the White House. And the president will come out in about 35 minutes or so to address all of this to the American people.

Well, the action by Standard & Poor's is being felt around the world. I want to bring in Andrew Stevens, who anchors CNN International in Hong Kong.

Andrew, you have been following this, and obviously the international markets -- you have got Europe, you've got Asia -- reacting to the credit downgrade.

What has been their response today? How nervous are they?

ANDREW STEVENS, CNN INTERNATIONAL ANCHOR: They are very nervous, Suzanne.

They are reacting not so much to the credit downgrade, because a lot of that had been expected. It was still obviously a shock when it happened, but it's more the ramifications of that downgrade. What is it going to mean for the U.S. economy?

Let's start with Asia. I'm in Hong Kong. Everybody's tucked up in bed at the moment. It's 12:30, but it sounds like it's going to be a pretty rough day again tomorrow. And that's because there is still this real lack of clarity about what it is going to mean for the longer-term strength and health of the U.S. economy.

You talked about the concerns that people in the U.S. have about the rising interest rates, the potential of rising interest rates. If that's going to slow down the U.S. economy even further, because it does seem to be on this slowing trajectory, that's going to worry the Asian exporters.

And we saw this big sell-off in the Asian exporters, plus the commodity companies, resource companies. They're the people who fuel the global economic growth with resources. Big sell-offs.

Japan, down two percent. Hong Kong, down two percent. Shanghai, down two percent.

It's the same story in London, only there's also this other twist, Suzanne. It's not just about the U.S. It's also about what is going on in Europe. Is Italy going to be sucked into the same debt obligation?

At the moment, the bond yield, which is the key measure to look at how the confidence in the Italian market is going, it's looking good at the moment. That's only because the European Central Bank is in there buying. This is a short-term fix only, so there are a lot of huge issues at the moment.

MALVEAUX: All right. Thank you very much, Andrew Stevens, for bringing that to us.

Obviously, we're following how the world market is responding to this economic crisis. And what are the leaders of Standard & Poor's say about the downgrade? We're going to hear from the managing director.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MALVEAUX: Standard & Poor's is standing by its decision to downgrade the U.S. credit rating in the face of some harsh criticism.

Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner says the agency showed terrible judgment.

Well, Poppy Harlow with CNNMoney.com just spoke with S&P's global head of sovereign ratings, and he talked about what the U.S. would have to do to get the AAA rating back. Poppy, what did he say?

POPPY HARLOW, CNNMONEY.COM: Yes, you know, Suzanne, you like - he vehemently opposes what Treasury secretary Geithner said, obviously. But he said in order to get this country sort of back on solid ground and not risk another downgrade because we're not negative when Standard & Poor's, they said, the next two years. A downgrade doesn't change, we could have a downgrade again. He said we need two things. First of all, we need political stability in Washington, a discipline that shows S&P that we can indeed follow through on our debt reduction plans. And secondly, we need revenues. We need to bring more money in to pay down that debt and bring that debt to GDP ratio down.

And I thought his point on taxes was particularly interesting. Take a listen.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

DAVID BEERS, S&P MANAGING DIRECTOR, SOVEREIGN RATINGS: It's possible that the administration will be able to persuade by next year Congress to, you know, do what the administration wants to do and secure some extra revenues from high-income taxpayers. That could enter the mix, in which case the outlook could possibly revert to stable.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

HARLOW: So, that's very interesting, his words on taxes because there has been a lot of talk about whether or not taxes need to be raised and a lot of experts you talk to say if you just do the math it's not going to work without increasing taxes in one way or another.

Historically, Suzanne, just to give you some perspective, five nations that have been downgraded from the AAA status and have gotten it back eventually, it has taken at minimum nine years to get them back, between nine and 16 years for those countries. So, we may have a long road ahead.

MALVEAUX: It would be very significant if we got it back earlier than that.

HARLOW: Right.

MALVEAUX: All right. Poppy Harlow. Thank you very much, Poppy.

President Obama facing a backlash from some of his strongest supporters. I'm going to talk with columnist John Avlon about the political fallout from the debt mess.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

OBAMA: We're watching the debt crisis play out in the stock market, but what about the political fallout? President Obama faces a backlash from some of the supporters over the debt deal.

And joining us to talk about that, CNN contributor. He's a senior political columnist for "Newsweek" and "The Daily Beast."

John, what struck me this weekend was talking to Obama's supporters, who were not only alarmed by what happened in this drop in the credit rating, they were also saying two things. One, that Obama had not been strong enough in getting a better deal and, two, he seems not overcome this credit debacle. Do you think the credit downgrade makes Obama a one-term president?

JOHN AVLON, CNN CONTRIBUTOR: No, I don't think - talking about one-term presidency at this point is very premature. We're still a long way off from the elections.

But it's true, of course, Suzanne, that elections are ultimately heavily influenced by what the economy is doing. People vote with their pocketbook when they get to the election booth. So, the fact that Obama's base has been very frustrated by both his government in the negotiation and really in his overall economic philosophy, it's important to remember they believe that the president should be focused more on spending, whereas of course, the right-wing criticism of President Obama is that he spent far too much and put us in a position of unsustainable debt and debt.

So, the president to some extent is stuck in the middle here. But for all the blame game going on in Washington, people give him most credit for dealing with the deficit and the negotiations, and then the Democrats in Congress and then Republicans.

MALVEAUX: Arianna Huffington of "The Huffington Post" has been a big supporter of the president, but she's also been quite critical of him because she believes that he's got his priorities wrong. This is what she told Farsad Zanganeh over the weekend.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

ARIANNA HUFFINGTON, "THE HUFFINGTON POST": First of all, editorially, you know, we have been very critical of many of Obama's policies. And our reporters, our journalists and everybody, you know, has been puzzled by the fact, and while you have a national consensus about prioritizing growth and jobs, Obama has not stood up for that.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

MALVEAUX: John, do you think that she has a point here, that the Republicans are successfully steering the president's agenda?

AVLON: Well, I don't know that they are steering the president's agenda, but the left-wing Democratic point that Arianna Huffington articulated is that the president should be focused exclusively on jobs, and that the best way to do that philosophically, Democrats believe, is to have more government spending.

Now, of course, that flies in the face of, for example, of what S&P said in their downgrade, which is that really this is really a problem with two - we face a downgrade for two reasons. One, unsustainable levels deficit and debt. And two, an atmosphere of political brinkmanship in Washington, which has made governments less stable and less effective.

So, you know, as we turn to this joint committee in Congress, which really has the onus on them now to start dealing with these two problems, more polarization is going to be the problem. And that's actively what people like Arianna Huffington are advocating from a Democratic position.

MALVEAUX: And John, the president presents himself as a moderate voice as this, the reasonable grown-up, in this debate. Does that appeal to moderates that he desperately needs?

AVLON: Well, certainly. I mean, look, the president needs - people are afraid in America if they appeal to moderates and the middle class. And the president needs to be seen as someone who is trying to be a bridge builder in Washington.

But he is caught between two extremes that are increasingly polarized. You know, if his base believes the best way to create jobs through the economy is through more spending, and the Republicans and the right wing of the Republican party believes that the problem is spending, and it's a classic divide at times. But what's going to be the responsibility of this new joint committee. And we'll need it. Members in the Congress put forward the Gang of Six to serve, we'll be okay. If they put their most ideological extreme members, we've got real problems, even more problems ahead.

MALVEAUX: All right. We will be looking to see who is on the committee. Thank you very much, John. Appreciate it.

Your mortgage, your car loan, even your credit cards. How they're going to be affected by the U.S. downgrade? We've got a live report

from New York.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MALVEAUX: The S&P has now followed its downgrade of the U.S. credit rating with another downgrade, this time lowering the rating of mortgage giants Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac. And the ripple effect, well, it keeps coming.

Our senior correspondent, Allan Chernoff, joins us live from New York. Allan, tell us what does that mean for Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to be downgraded, for our mortgage rates?

ALLAN CHERNOFF, CNN SENIOR CORRESPONDENT: It's pretty significant, Suzanne. What is happening right now, as a result of these downgrades, investors are selling the bonds that Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac issue, selling the mortgage-backed securities that they issue.

Important to note: those bonds are the source for much of the mortgage money that banks find. After all, Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac buy the mortgages from the bank, package them and then we sell them. So, because investors are selling off those bonds right now, those securities, that could put upward pressure on mortgage rates.

However, it's not quite as simple as that. There are saunter-waiting factors at work. Stay with me. Typically, money being yields are the best for mortgage rates. They are right now in the eye of the storm. After all, that's where S&P first did the downgrade, right? Because they are in the eye of the storm, investors are rushing into these, so treasury bond prices have actually been rising, which means their yield, their interest rates have been going lower.

So, as a result, mortgage rates actually have been dropping. The 30-year fixed rate mortgage right now, which is tied to the 10-year treasury note, well, that is at 4.5 percent. That's the national average, according to BankRate.com. And for adjustable-rate mortgages that tie to one-year treasury notes, right now, the average for a five-year adjustable rate mortgage is 3.2 percent. Those are very, very low interest rates, Suzanne.

MALVEAUX: What about other loans? What does this mean for other loans potentially?

CHERNOFF: Auto loans are typically tied to three-year treasury notes. If we are talking about, say, a four-year car loan, and the national average right now is 5.6 percent. Very affordable.

Credit cards? Well, you know, they don't move all that much in relationship to what is happening in the treasury market. In fact, they are tied to the prime rate, which right now is 3.25 percent. And as you see, high credit card rates, 14.4 percent. And they are not going to change all that much.

MALVEAUX: Okay. Good deal. Thank you very much, Allan. Appreciate it.

We are going to have your responses to the "Talk Back" question. Does America need a liberal version of the Tea Party?

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

MALVEAUX: You've been sounding off on the "Talk Back" question. Does America need a liberal version of the Tea Party? Carol Costello, she's got your responses.

Hey, Carol.

CAROL COSTELLO, CNN CORRESPONDENT: I must say I've enjoyed our responses this morning, Suzanne. This is the "Talk Back" question again, does America need a liberal Tea Party?

This from Trisha. "Yes. And I have a good name for it, the PEA party, p'd off enough already."

This from Lori. "As tempting as it is to want one, I think it would be even more dangerous. The problem with the Tea Party isn't their politics, it's their unwillingness to compromise and their ignorance of basic government rules. We need to continue listening to reason and admit if we're going to win over the crazy and the stupid." Oh.

This from Chris. "The liberals and Democrats are radical enough. A liberal Tea Party would scare me to death."

This from Aldo. "Yes, we need a 'taxes on the rich are too damn low' party."

And this from DeLoe. "The coffee party." That's what we need. "Slogan, at least we're awake."

Please keep the conversation going, facebook.com/cnn. And thanks, as always, for your comments.

MALVEAUX: Always interesting. All right, thank you, Carol. Appreciate it.

We are just moments away from Presidential Channels live stream from the White House on the economy. Wolf Blitzer and "The Best Political Team on Television" are going to bring you special coverage of that up ahead.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

WOLF BLITZER, CNN ANCHOR: What a difference an A makes, or does it? We want to welcome our viewers in the United States and around the world. I'm Wolf Blitzer. We're covering the breaking news.

Wall Street spending yet another day in what's being described as freak out mode. You can see the Dow Jones Industrials down almost 300 points right now. The most apparent reason is the first ever downgrade of U.S. government credit by Standard & Poor's. One of the three main ratings firms.

On Friday, S&P downgraded the rating of long term U.S. Treasury notes from AAA to AA Plus. And today it did the same to Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, the long suffering home loan agencies now fully owned by you and me, that would be the U.S. taxpayer.

Just moments from now, President Obama is expected to address these matters from the White House. First, I want to share some details of what you might not necessarily be getting from all the frantic headlines out there.

The number one downside of any credit downgrade is higher interest rates. It goes with packages of higher risk. But interest rates on U.S. Treasury bonds, right now, guess what, they're actually a little bit lower today than they were on Friday. Prices of companies are higher.

Government debt still in demand. Stocks, as you know, are plunging. But in the year after Canada was downgraded in 1993, Canadian stocks rose more than 15 percent. Same with Japan in 1995. In Tokyo, the market actually rose 25 percent that year.

And you may have heard the public scolding from China, quoting now, "the U.S. has to re-establish the common sense principle that one should live within its means." Fair enough. But what's China's credit rating. It's AA minus. That would be two notches below AA Plus.

We have reporters standing by, analysts standing by. All of them is in New York. John King is here in Washington, David Gergen. Let me bring in Brianna Keller over at the White House first.

Brianna, set the stage for us. This was a late addition to the president's schedule, 1:00 p.m., right minutes or so from now. The request to hear from the president. What was the thinking at the White House?

BRIANNA KEILAR, CNN WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT: A late add, Wolf. And it's important to note, this is being billed by the

White House not just as reaction to the downgrade by Standard & Poor's, but as general remarks about the economy. As we see the markets react, of course, to the downgrade, we see the worsening situation in the euro zone and concerns about how that will affect the U.S., expect President Obama to sound a reassuring note. To sort of be a counselor, if you will, and try to point to some areas of the U.S. economy that people should be somewhat optimistic by or at least reassured by.

He will address, we expect, the downgrade. Well. And we saw this all weekend long from White House officials and surrogates of President Obama's, really slamming S&P and attacking the credibility of S&P. Also pointing a finger at House Republicans for the process that we saw, this all-time process that led to the debt ceiling deal. Of course, that finger being pointed both ways there.

And we're also assessing the president is a way to kind of capitalize on this message still, though, coming from S&P and using that bipartisan congressional commission to seize the moment and do what the White House, Wolf, calls a balanced approach to deficit reduction. That, of course, means adding tax increases, something that Republicans don't want to do, in addition to dealing with entitlements, something the Democrats don't want to do.

Wolf.

BLITZER: Brianna Keller, stand by.

Donald Trump is actually joining us on the phone right now.

Donald, thanks very much. What would you like to hear from the president on this historic, tumultuous day?

DONALD TRUMP, REAL ESTATE MAGAZINE/REALITY TV STAR (via telephone): Well, it's been an amazing period of time, Wolf, when you look at what's going on in the country; to be thinking that Standard & Poor's, which I don't have great respect for because I watched their call on the mortgage market and on the housing market and they were just getting wrong on that and I saw how what they're trying to do by doing this, other than got some nice publicity for themselves, or to try and salvage their reputation.

But to think that they would want to do what they did is shocking. And this would be a great time for the Republicans and the Democrats and the president to get together and really look at something that could be good and really great for the country. I think it's a great opportunity to do something great for the country, reworking business things out, balance the budget, or at least close to balance the budget to put it in the Democratic's team, but go out and do something really great for the country. Come back from your vacation and do the right thing. This would be a great -- this is a great opportunity.

BLITZER: Well, they do have a holiday. They have Thanksgiving, so they're supposed to come up with a new plan by Thanksgiving. But the problem now is the Democrats really don't want to have major entitlement cuts, cuts in Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid; and the Republicans don't want to have an tax increase. How do you bridge that gap?

TRUMP: Well, that's true. And, you know, the other problem is, Thanksgiving, that's a long time away. This thing could be knocked out in two days if you had real leadership. You need leadership. And people can knock something out in two days.

I heard about the wonderful committee, and then I hear Thanksgiving, and then it can be extended beyond that date and you almost say, what are they doing? Why can't they just do it now?

And, you know, on your show and others, I've always heard that, you know, they were going to have \$4 billion in cuts. That's a heavy word because three point eight -- you know I mean -- but you know, and now we see a massive amount of this, right? But they were going to have \$4 billion in cuts and now all of a sudden \$4 billion is not (INAUDIBLE).

BLITZER: Yes, you know (INAUDIBLE) we don't talk about billions anymore, we talk about trillions. Yes, we talk about trillions instead of billions.

TRUMP: No, we used to do that with billions.

BLITZER: Let me get back to that --

TRUMP: You said I, right, would do the show --

BLITZER: Yes, right.

TRUMP: And we'd talk billions, and now we talk trillions. We don't mention billions anymore.

BLITZER: Right. So let's talk a little bit about what would be important. You would -- would you like to hear the president say, I think you've alluded to this, you know what, Congress, you're in recess until September 7th. These are critical days right now. Get back to Washington and let's come up with some joint programs that the country can see to create jobs, to try to reassure investors out there. Is that what you want to see?

TRUMP: Absolutely I'd like to see that because, again, Thanksgiving's a long time off and I think it would be really a good sign. I think people should be called back and you work out a deal.

If Standard & Poor's did one thing that was great, Wolf, it was that they should have been able to reunite the Republicans and the Democrats and the president on maybe getting a deal done, because it's an embarrassment to the country. I mean all over the world -- I'm getting calls from people in Europe, from people in Asia. They're saying, what's happening with your country? Who's running that country? They cannot even believe the things that are happening. As to -- well, of course, you look at the market and obviously the markets are down, you know, tremendously all over the world because of us. They're not because of something else, because of us. So -- but people are calling me, big people; and they're saying, you know, what's going on with your country? What's wrong? It is rather amazing.

BLITZER: Yes. Well, you know, what's also amazing is this drop, what about 300 points, today. It comes on the heels of more than 1,000 points over the last few weeks. This has been pretty steady now, long before Standard & Poor's came out with their downgrade of the U.S. credit rating -- credit worthiness from AAA to AA Plus. You see 316 points down right now.

Why does S&P, which was, as you point out, wrong in failing to understand Lehman Brothers or AIG before the great recession, as it's called, why do they have such clout today?

TRUMP: Well, I don't think they should have, and I've watched Mr. Bear and I've watched the gentleman today on the show and different shows and I think they're having a good time going around talking about S&P. I don't think they should be given credibility, Wolf, but they are given some credibility. And, you know, frankly, the country is not very credible right now. I mean we're not -- we're not being viewed upon -- if you look at what's going on -- when you want to invest, people tell you, no, no be doing. They want you to invest your money in China. You'll get a better return.

You know, it's pretty sad what's going on. But S&P, I think, frankly, you know, they shouldn't be given the kind of clout they're given. A lot of it is just tradition. They've been around a long time. But they've made so many bad calls that they should not be given the credibility that they are given.

BLITZER: What about this proposal that Mike Huckabee put out there, I'm sure you've heard it, that you would be a good secretary of the Treasury. Is that something you'd be interested in doing?

TRUMP: Well, you know, I just heard about it this morning. First of all, I respect him a lot. I think he's a great guy. And that's before the proposal.

But I just heard about it this morning and, you know, one thing, you'd shake them up. I will tell you, I can tell you a couple of groups that wouldn't be too happy. OPEC wouldn't be too happy. China wouldn't be too happy. There would be some groups that would not be.

because these are people that are ripping off this country like no one has ever ripped it off before.

And I would tell you, wait, getting back to that, if the country ran well, if the country was prosperous, like China, like India, like others. I mean some of these countries are doing so well now, better than ever before by far, and on our back, if the country was doing well, all of these things are in equilibrium and as to Social Security and all of the other things you're talking about would pale in comparison. I mean, they'll go away.

But we have a security issue not doing well. It's doing much worse than people understand. We don't have our jobs. We don't have our manufacturing. You look at what's going on in China. We're rebuilding China. We are rebuilding China. We are rebuilding China. And they manipulate their currency, they make it almost impossible to compete because of that. It's unfair what they are doing, and they will make hundreds of billions of dollars of profit, let's use the word profit, on this country, on our security, and we have nobody that protects us. We have no leaders that go in there and protect.

So, I'm honored by Mike's suggestion. I think he's a great guy. I think he would have done unbelievably well, and that he probably would have gotten the nomination had he decided to run. But you know, look, we do need somebody that will take our country back because we have lost -- or at best are losing our great country.

BLITZER: You have any regrets or any second thoughts about your decision? And I just want to point out, think about this for a second. It's the top of the hour, I want to read our viewers in the United States and around the world that we're awaiting a statement from the president of the United States, he's going to be going into the diplomatic dining room there over at the state -- at the Whitehouse.

As you can see, the president will be going to the podium there and making a statement. We are told it will be on the overall state of the U.S. economy, and the U.S. economy as well as on the tragedy of the death of the 30 American troops in Afghanistan over the weekend, 22 Navy SEALs killed when that helicopter went down, the eastern part of Afghanistan. So, the president will be making a statement.

We're now told, by the way, it has been delayed by a half an hour, so he's not going to be speaking until around 1:30 p.m. Eastern, about 30 minutes or so time now. Well, of course, here are our viewers here in the CNN NEWSROOM. We've got all our anchors, all our analysts standing by.

We are continuing the conversation with Donald Trump, right?

Donald, the decision you made a couple months ago not to seek the Republican presidential nomination. Any regrets?

TRUMP: Well, first of all, I want to say as I was listening to you very eloquently state about the president's conference, I was saying what a terrible time this is for our country. Our economy is absolutely doing horribly, the helicopter was just a disaster yesterday, what a tragedy that was. And you know, just what a -- what a terrible time it is for this country. This is -- things that you wouldn't have thought could have happened. I mean, it's all going on with this economy, and it's just one news after another, the economy, the helicopter, you could just go story after story. Everything bad, nothing good, it's a terrible time.

I have made a decision, as you know -- in fact I was watching a particular show called "Meet the Press" this day before I did this, and -- but by the time I make -- and I was leading in the polls with, actually, Mike Huckabee, the two of us were leading in the polls, but I made a decision for the reason that I made; however, I will tell you -- and I was happy with the decision, but if the economy continues to be bad, and it looks to me like it's getting worse and not better, and if the Republicans pick the wrong person, I would seriously consider doing it as an independent, and I think it's maybe time for that. Hopefully I won't have to because I love what I am doing, you know I love what I am doing and I'm having a good time and we're doing well. But if the economy continues to go this way it's going and if the Republicans pick the wrong candidate, I would certainly consider it, well.

BLITZER: Well, who would be -- you know with the Republican candidates are out there, and presumably Rick Perry the governor of Texas is going to leave his hat in the ring, we assume fairly soon. Tell me who the right person would be, who the wrong person would be?

TRUMP: Well, I know a lot of them and a lot of them have come to Trump Tower recently, Sarah Palin who is a terrific person and a friend of mine, she came in, and Michele Bachmann came in and she was great. I don't know Romney. I do know the governor of Texas, Rick Perry, who is a very interesting candidate, and I think he will prove to be an interesting candidate. But it's a little bit too early for me to speak up on that.

I will have something to say about it in the future, but I really don't know Romney. I will tell you that I was very disappointed that Romney didn't interpret or interpret in some form to get a better deal done in terms of the Republicans -- no really, in terms of the country. And I was also amazed that here is the guy that is the leading candidate, and he allowed this -- as you know, this reorganization is gas after the election instead of before the election, because if you had the reorganization before the election, Obama would not have won, he just could not have won.

We would have gone through the same thing as what we are going through now in six months or in nine months or in a year from now, before the election. So -- I mean, certainly, if you are running and if you are a leading candidate, you want to make sure this comes due. Now, that's not necessarily for the good of the country, it was for the good of getting re-elected, which would be for the good of the country.

BLITZER: Well, do you basically agree with President Obama that any long-term reduction in unemployment, the deficit, the deficit, has to include what's called a balanced approach? Some entitlement cuts, cuts in spending for Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid; but at the same time, some -- eliminate -- some increased tax revenue, or eliminating some of those loopholes, the subsidies, the that's some of the big corporations get, or very wealthy. People like you, for example, get -- is the president right when he wants what's called that balanced approach?

TRUMP: Well, what I do think is this, the good economy solves all problems. It solves the life of Medicare, which I would protect to the death, because I think it's very sad when they have to start playing with Medicare. I thought that when Congressman Ryan came up with a plan, I think a lot of Republicans are going to lose elections. He seemed -- right, wrong, indifferent, he should not have come up with that plan at that time. And you saw what happened in Ireland, where is this person Ryan who lost really to a point that should have never seen him without that plan. But his economy solves the problems.

With that being said -- I will tell you, and I am a Republican, but with that being said, when the oil companies are making billions and billions and billions of dollars, and believe me, they are in cahoots with OPEC. There's no question in my mind that the oil companies are in total cahoots with OPEC. And OPEC -- and nobody, including China, has abused this country like OPEC. So, when the oil companies are getting subsidies, and when the oil companies are paying very little tax, I would say -- I would tax them and I would tax them very, very, very. That I can tell you.

BLITZER: So, they would lose some of that -- Exxon mobile, for example, BP, they are making tens of billions of dollars --

(CROSSTALK)

BLITZER: Let me -- Donald, old on a second. Donald, hold on a second. Does Exxon mobile need government subsidies right now making tens of billions in profits?

TRUMP: Absolutely not. It's absolutely insane to think that Exxon mobile is getting subsidies from the United States government.

BLITZER: All right. Well it is not me; you one other than.

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: The oil companies have not been doing their job in terms -- in terms of what's good for this country. And if you look at what I am seeing, and I am looking at some subsidies that they get, and when you look at ExxonMobil and some of the other oil companies, every one of which is making money like nobody has ever seen made before, and --

BLITZER: Here is another example.

TRUMP: The United States government is absolutely insane, and on top of that, they are in cahoots with OPEC.

BLITZER: Well, let me ask you two other examples, and you tell me if you think there is some area where the editing reveals the U.S. government for American taxpayers could come in. There is a hedge fund manager, and I don't know if you know him, in New York named John Paulson, who runs a hedge fund. He made last year, \$8.8 billion. That's probably more than you make, Donald, \$8.8 billion, and most of the income was taxed at 15 percent rather than the maximum 38 percent. Is that fair?

TRUMP: Well, it's something that I'm going to be discussing in the future if I decide to do something, OK, because you know, I don't want to get too much into it. I can tell you this, I am very strongly for not raising taxes, because I do believe in the incentive theory. I am a big incentive person, and I believe in not raising taxes, that smaller taxes make people work harder, et cetera, et cetera. But it is something I'm discussing in the future, because I have very strong views on it.

BLITZER: Of the whole 15 percent --

TRUMP: No, I do have something to say. I just don't want to do it right now.

BLITZER: Warren Buffett keeps saying his tax rate for a lot of his income is a smaller tax rate than his secretary's tax rate, and that's one of the issues that --

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: And I understand exactly what he is saying --

BLITZER: Let me just press you.

TRUMP: -- but I mean you're strong views on that and I'll be raising those views public at some point.

BLITZER: Well, what about General Electric -- and I know that --

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: I know John Paulson and in fact, he manages some of my money and he's doing a good job. I mean, John Paulson is a good guy, he's a great guy.

BLITZER: He was the --

TRUMP: But I do have strong views on it and I will make them public sometime.

BLITZER: What about GE, which made \$14 billion in profit last year, \$5 billion of which here in the United States, the rest overseas, and they paid virtually no federal income tax because they had losses in earlier years. Is that an area where there should be tax reform?

TRUMP: Well, if you look, Jeff Immelt who's a friend of mine, and he's a great guy, but he was appointed by President Obama to be the head of his council, so obviously it's OK with the president.

BLITZER: He's helping the president in looking for ways to create jobs here in the United States.

(CROSSTALK)

TRUMP: No, he was appointed by the president to be the head of one of the basic councils.

BLITZER: You're right.

TRUMP: I mean, you know, he's a very important player --

BLITZER: -- the jobs player (ph) in the council.

TRUMP: -- in the Obama group, and I think that's fine because I had a lot of respect Jeff Immelt, I think he's a great guy. And I think, you know, he -- it was a tough period of time for him over the last two years, but he's bringing General Electric back. You have to look really at the particulars of that one.

BLITZER: All right. But that's an area a lot of people are looking at as far as tax reform down the road. Donald, I don't know what your schedule is like, I want to take a quick break. We're waiting for the president of the United States, he's going to be speaking in about 20 minutes. Can you stick around or do you got to go?

TRUMP: Well, why don't your folks call back in a few minutes and I'll be here. I run in my office working like he's supposed to be, OK?

BLITZER: Over at Trump Towers?

TRUMP: Do you want to do that?

BLITZER: Or you can just wait two minutes and we'll pick it up -- the conversation. If you can wait a second, we'll pick up the conversation.

TRUMP: Go ahead.

BLITZER: All right. Donald Trump is with us, we've got Al Velshi, Richard Quest, John King, we're going to set the stage for the president's remarks. The markets, right now, not doing well. Much more of the coverage here in the CNN NEWSROOM right after this.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

Weather forecast

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Pro-Donald Trump Website Evolves Into 527 Group

Fri, 2011-09-02 11:44 | admin

ABC's Michael Falcone and Jennifer Walsh report:

Donald Trump may have passed on a presidential bid for now, but his supporters intend to keep hope alive.

Trump's top political operative, Michael Cohen, who founded the website, ShouldTrumpRun.com has morphed it into a so-called 527 group, which is allowed to raise money for political activities and issue advocacy.

Cohen says the purpose of the group is to continue to encourage Trump, who announced in May that he would not seek the Republican presidential nomination, to change his mind and run. Trump has been hinting he might jump into the race as an independent.

"Americans are tired of listening to the same, old promises election year after election year," Cohen told ABC News. "Mr. Trump's positions resonate with the American people because they are no-nonsense, straightforward and practical."

Cohen, who is an executive vice president and special counsel at the Trump Organization, said the group will continue to promote the principles and issues that Trump espouses. And he predicted that it would "raise an enormous amount of money right away."

The new group, Should Trump Run, Inc., was filed on Thursday as a California non-profit by attorney Paul Jensen of Jensen and Associates and is headquartered in Orange County. Cohen said the group would "fully comply with all IRS rules and regulations."

The plan is for the group to cultivate grassroots support among Trump's supporters. The original ShouldTrumpRun site attracted over 1.5 million visitors.

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America

Submitted by Anonymous on Tue, 2011-09-27 10:23.

I would like to see Mr. Trump run I think it is time for a non-political body who loves the US and believes in her to stand up for her. The government is a corporation and should be ran like one, the profit margin should always outweigh the payroll. Likewise, sending American troops into harm's way for the benefit of another country rather than both countries is simply stupid. We are allowing millions of illegals into our country for what? No fence will stop them the simple solution is E-Verify for employment, housing and public assistance, heavy fines for companies employing them and/or renting to them and no anchor babies. It is long passed the time that someone stands up for the



Poll

Donald Trump would be the best:

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- ☐ Secretary of State
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THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

WSJ.com

NOVEMBER 22, 2011, 8:19 AM ET

Trump Threatens to Spend Millions on a Presidential Run

He's done it before, and he's doing it again.

In his new book, "Time to Get Tough," Donald Trump lashes into President Barack Obama and threatens to run against him next year if the Republicans don't nominate a strong candidate.

Beating the drum even louder, Mr. Trump details his net worth—which he puts at \$7 billion—and says he's prepared to pour a large chunk of his \$270 million in liquid assets into a presidential bid. (Mr. Trump values the Trump brand alone at \$3 billion.)

"He's prepared to finance an independent run for president if he's not satisfied with the Republican nominee," says the real estate mogul's right-hand man, Michael Cohen.

Mr. Trump made noises about a presidential campaign this spring, including a high-profile, campaign-style jaunt aboard his personal jet to New Hampshire. But he decided instead to stick to his business enterprises and his reality TV show.

In the book, due out next month, Mr. Trump holds nothing back in blaming Mr. Obama for all that ails the economy. He claims Mr. Obama has spent much of his time travelling "around the world apologizing for the country" and "playing nice with China."

Book tours and presidential campaigns have become almost synonymous this year. Mr. Cohen says the book would segue well into a presidential bid. "This is a very political book," he says.

Meanwhile, Mr. Cohen claims he is doing all the necessary advance work, just in case his boss does pull the trigger — a decision Mr. Cohen says will come "in the first week in June."

"I already mapped out everything that has to be done to be an effective candidate and what we'd have to do to get on the ballot on all 50 states," Mr. Cohen says.

The Trump aide declined to elaborate on which GOP candidates would draw Mr. Trump's ire, and a possible independent challenge. But he did hint that the billionaire wouldn't run against Newt Gingrich. "He and Newt are close," Mr. Cohen said.



Donald Trump arrives for Regis Philbin's farewell episode of "Live! with Regis and Kelly." in New York, Nov. 18, 2011. (AP Photo/Charles Sykes)

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Attachment L

The New York Times

The Caucus

The Politics and Government Blog of The Times

DECEMBER 24, 2011, 5:08 PM

Trump Quits G.O.P.

By SARAH MASLIN NIEL

Donald J. Trump has withdrawn from the Republican Party to retain the ability to run as an independent candidate in the 2012 presidential election, his political adviser confirmed on Friday.

"Mr. Trump did this in order to preserve his legal right to run as an independent if in fact he's not satisfied with who the Republican candidate is going to be," said the adviser, Michael Cohen, a Trump Organization executive.

"His core Republican principles haven't changed at all," he said. "This was simply to preserve his right to run."

Mr. Cohen would not say which of the seven Republican candidates would prompt Mr. Trump to enter the race, but Mr. Trump has been openly critical of Representative Ron Paul of Texas and Jon M. Huntsman Jr.

This year, Mr. Trump considered running as a Republican, but abandoned his bid in early May, saying, "Business is my greatest passion, and I am not ready to leave the private sector."

Mr. Trump may jump back into the game when his NBC television show "The Apprentice" wraps up in June, his adviser said. "Even at that late date," Mr. Cohen said, "He still will be capable of ensuring that his name is on the ballot in all 50 states."

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Attachment M

By Huma Khan
@huma

Jan 30, 2012 3:57pm

Donald Trump Staff in Talks With Financiers, Campaign Managers to Explore Third Party Bid



Bobby Bank/Getty Images

ABC News' Huma Khan and Jennifer Wach report:

Donald Trump's top political adviser told ABC News he's speaking to "high-level political operatives" to explore a third-party presidential bid on behalf of the real estate mogul, in a sign that Trump may not quite be done with the 2012 presidential race just yet.

"I can confirm that over the past two weeks I have spoken with many high-level political operatives, campaign managers, finance directors — some of whom I have spoken to in the past. Most are new people from all over the country," said Michael Cohen, executive vice president at the Trump Organization and special counsel to the reality-TV star.

"Until the time Mr. Trump decides to either endorse a candidate or run himself, I am exploring on his behalf the possibilities of ensuring Mr. Trump appears on the ballot in all states, and to develop a team of professionals who could ensure a potential victory," Cohen added.

Back in March, Cohen met with Iowa GOP Chairman Matt Strawn and 18 political operatives, activists and fundraisers in Iowa, but Trump decided not to run.

Trump, 65, himself indicated this weekend that he might pursue a third-party run.

"It's a very sad situation what's happening to the country," he said on CBS's "Face the Nation." "I hope I don't have to, but I may absolutely."

Cohen told ABC today that Trump's preference is to endorse a Republican candidate "as he loves what it is that he's currently doing," but if the Republican Party doesn't nominate someone who "The Apprentice" star believes is capable of defeating President Obama, "he may consider running as an independent for the presidency."

"He's both more than financially capable of funding a race and is adamant that America must become great again or forever be lost," Cohen said.

Cohen, who co-founded the Web site "Should Trump Run," said that he has been getting thousands of emails daily calling on Trump to reconsider and enter the race.

Trump's contract with NBC ends after "The Apprentice" season finale in May, after which the TV star will reconsider his decision.

The real estate tycoon turned reality TV host switched his party affiliation from Republican to "unaffiliated" in December and hinted that he might reach out to Americans Elect, an online, independent presidential nominating organization.

In prior years, Trump has flirted with the idea of running for president — first in 1988, then in 1999 — but he has said this is his most serious consideration.

SOURCE: World News

23 101 |

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4 of 4 DOCUMENTS

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 The New York Times Blogs
 (The Caucus)

February 2, 2012 Thursday

SECTION: US; politics**LENGTH:** 704 words**HEADLINE:** Trump Endorses Romney in a 7-Minute Appearance**BYLINE:** ASHLEY PARKER and TRIP GABRIEL**HIGHLIGHT:**

"There are some things that you just can't imagine happening in your life," Mitt Romney said. "This is one of them."

BODY:

LAS VEGAS - Donald Trump endorsed Mitt Romney here Thursday afternoon in a joint appearance that lasted less than seven minutes and included no questions.

The two men stood behind a lectern emblazoned with a gold "Trump" plaque (a large Romney sign hung off to the side, largely out of the TV shots), and the endorsement came amid several impromptu news conferences that Mr. Trump organized for himself.

When they finally took the stage together, Mr. Romney uttered perhaps the truest statement of the event, which had come together in a last-minute flurry after false reports that Mr. Trump would throw his support behind Newt Gingrich. "There are some things that you just can't imagine happening in your life," Mr. Romney said. "This is one of them."

He proceeded largely on message, making sure to give a shout-out to Mr. Trump's "magnificent hotel," and calling his endorsement "a delight."

Then, continuing onto the message his campaign presumably wanted him to drive home, Mr. Romney added, "I'm so honored and pleased to have his endorsement, and of course I'm looking for the endorsement of the people of Nevada."

Promoting his own success as a businessman, Mr. Romney said: "I spent my life in the private sector. Not quite as successful as this guy, but successful none the less."

As Mr. Romney and his wife, Ann, stood off to the side, Mr. Trump then stepped up, grinning and nodding at the crowd, which offered up occasional shouts of "The Donald!"

Calling it a "real honor and privilege to endorse Mitt Romney," Mr. Trump added, "Mitt is tough, he's smart, he's sharp, he's not going to allow bad things to continue to happen to this country that we all love."

He concluded: "So, Governor Romney, go out and get 'em. You can do it."

**Trump Endorses Romney in a 7-Minute Appearance The New York Times Blogs(The Caucus) February 2, 2012
Thursday**

On Thursday morning, Newt Gingrich was asked while touring a forklift manufacturer in Las Vegas if he was expecting Mr. Trump's endorsement, as insiders in his campaign had told a variety of news outlets, including The New York Times, the previous evening.

"Who knows?" Mr. Gingrich said with a shrug. "I'm just watching in amazement."

"Some people have this knack of gathering attention," he said with a laugh, referring to Mr. Trump.

Michael Cohen, a political advisor to Mr. Trump, said that the developer-turned-reality star never gave Mr. Gingrich an indication of an imminent endorsement. He and Mr. Trump were traveling to Las Vegas, Mr. Cohen said, as the Internet was lighting up Wednesday night with accounts of a Gingrich nod. "We landed and the cellphones started going," Mr. Cohen, who is Mr. Trump's usual conduit to political reporters, said. He made no effort to throw cold water on the emerging reports. "You can't get 1,000 e-mails and start responding," he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Trump held at least two impromptu news conferences as he wandered around his hotel, pausing to answer reporters' questions with relish. No, he would not entertain a third-party or independent run if Mr. Romney was the nominee. Yes, he likes Mr. Romney's tough stance on China. And all those mean things he said about the guy just months ago? Well, that was before he knew him.

"Just twiddling my thumbs," Mr. Trump joked when asked if he planned to pass the time "hanging out" until Mr. Romney arrived. In fact, he explained, he was touring his hotel with his "hotel people."

"How do you like it?" he asked a group of traveling reporters, many of whom had spent the night elsewhere. "Do you see why it's the No. 1 hotel in Nevada?"

At another point, the crowd grew so thick that network and cable anchors, vying for Mr. Trump's attention, seemed to spin him around like a bobble-head doll, shouting out questions from all sides.

When the brief endorsement wound down, Mr. and Mrs. Romney, after greeting some friends in the front row, retreated offstage, as Mr. Trump followed.

Unable to help himself, he turned back to the room and flashed a "V" sign - for victory, we assume - before he disappeared. Only to reappear again, just moments later, for yet another press conference.

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Should Donald Trump Run For President?

Fri, 2011-01-21 09:05 | [ShouldTrumpRun](#)

Are you one of the many frustrated Americans sick and tired of hearing the same old mundane political campaign promises? Empty promises echo across the nation every four years; stringing us along as we wait for something good to finally happen. Well it is finally here, and it is real. It is DONALD J. TRUMP. We need to convince Donald Trump to run for President in 2012 and end all of the old rhetoric occurring in Washington. This campaign will sweep a nation ready for "real" change and improve the lives of each and every American citizen.

Trump has the knowledge, the resources, the power and the experience needed to re-shape our ailing nation; restoring our hope. Under his guidance, The United States of America will once again be the land of opportunity, prosperity and strength!

Join me in creating a grass roots movement designed to save the greatest democracy in the world. Our country is heading down a dangerous path. I ask you to help me urge Donald Trump to throw his hat into the political ring. Our elected officials are mortgaging away our future by spending money that we do not have and in the process, creating unsustainable deficits.

We need to stop this bleeding now and Donald Trump will help to heal our economic wounds. We cannot afford to allow foreign countries to take advantage of us, improve their economies and leave our citizens without jobs. Donald Trump will even out the playing field and develop a legitimate plan to reign in our massive trade deficits.

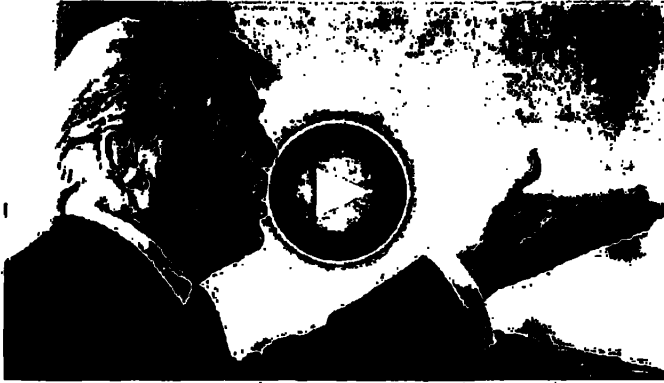
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Fri, 2011-09-16 01:46 | [admin](#)

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Pro-Donald Trump Website Evolves Into 527 Group

Fri, 2011-09-02 11:44 | admin

ABC's Michael Falcone and Jennifer Wlach report:

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Donald Trump Answers Boy's Prayer for New Bike

Tue, 2011-08-30 00:25 | admin



After his bike was stolen out of his parents' garage, 10-year-old Culley Larson posted a video to YouTube praying to get it back. Thanks to Donald Trump, Larson's prayers were answered. After seeing Larson's video on Fox New Channel, Trump bought Larson a brand new bike, which he gave to him on Fox and Friends this morning.

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The Eric Trump Foundation

Sat, 2011-08-27 19:57 | admin

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The Eric Trump Foundation strives to improve the lives of children battling life-threatening diseases at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. What began as the collaborative effort of Eric Trump and several friends five years ago has grown to include over 300(+) donors and world-class sponsors. To date, we have raised over \$3 million to support children and families in need.

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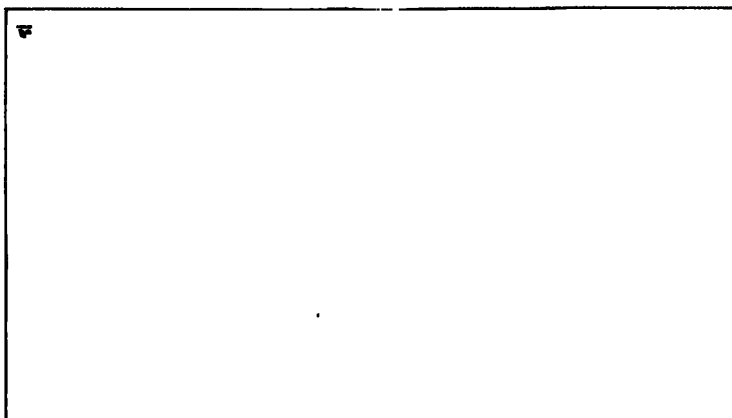
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