

CBS Mornings

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8:00:08 a.m. [TEASE]

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Abdul el-Sayed]

VLADIMIR DUTHIERS: Coming up, Michigan Senate candidate Abdul el-Sayed, why he thinks his type of progressive politics is just what America needs.

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8:00:55 a.m.

5 minutes and 48 seconds

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: El-Sayed & Stevens Primary Too Close to Call]

DUTHIERS: All right, we're gonna begin this hour with the man at the center of a huge debate among Democrats. Michigan Senate candidate Dr. Abdul el-Sayed, who is narrowly ahead in the race to be his party's nominee. CBS News says the race is still too close to call. El-Sayed is a progressive, and his win would be a very big deal for the party's left. Dr. Abdul El-Sayed joins us now from Detroit. Good morning, sir, good to see you.

ABDUL EL-SAYED: Good morning, Vlad.

DUTHIERS: So, as you know, this race is much closer than polling suggested. Have you at all heard from Congresswoman Stevens?

[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: El-Sayed on Primary & Future of Democratic Party]

EL-SAYED: We haven't had a chance to talk. It's been about six hours since NBC called it last night. We've got to bring the party together, and I know both she and I are committed to doing that. We've only got 13 weeks to beat a guy who has no business being in the U.S. Senate. And so, I'm looking forward to that conversation. Grateful for the hard-fought race that we had, and the things that united us, and the things that unify us are so much bigger than any of the things that divided us.

DUTHIERS: So, let's talk about that unity. What do you think you need to do to sway Haley Stevens supporters over to your side?

EL-SAYED: Well, Vlad, I'll tell you this, and we set out 13 months ago, 15 months ago now to build a movement, to get money out of politics, put money in your pocket, pass Medicare for All. Mike Rogers is a guy who wants to put more money in politics. He is dead set on taking money out of your pockets by colluding with some of the worst folks and the worst corporations who've taken money out. And, if he had his way, he would have Medicare for none. So, I think the things

that bring us together are so much bigger, and the focus that we need to have to take on my garage and the Trumpism that he's chosen to represent are the things that are gonna bring us together. There's a lot of healing to do after a hard-fought primary like this, but I have said that this is a big, open movement. We welcome anybody and everybody who understands that we need a government of the people, by the people, and for the people to it, and I'm looking forward to welcoming our new friends to this coalition to beat Mike Rogers in the fall.

DUTHIERS: All right, doctor, let's talk about Haley Stevens and the fact that she was obviously pro-Israel. You've been very clear about pulling back the spending for countries like the state of Israel. But what would you say to some of her supporters who see Israel as a key ally of the United States, and that they deserve our financial support? I know that you've gone on the record to say that you think that that money that we spend should be spent and invested here in the United States. But many people see that as a false choice. The federal budget is nearly \$7 trillion. Many voters would say that the United States can invest at home while also supporting allies whose security interests advance America's own. How do you address that?

EL-SAYED: Well, Vlad, I'll tell you this. I'm coming to you from Detroit. I can go five minutes in almost any direction, and I can show you a school that looks like it did 50 years ago, and when you talk about improving that school, everybody asks, well, how do you go and pay for that? I just don't know why we don't ask the same question when it comes to unconditional foreign military aid for any country. That's Israel, sure, but that's also Egypt, where my family immigrated from. That's also Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, all countries that we send unconditional foreign military aid, and I don't know about you or the viewers, but I don't pay my taxes thinking, man, I can't wait for another country to get a bomb or a tank —

DUTHIERS: But what kind of message —

EL-SAYED: — and think, man,

DUTHIERS: — does that send, doctor?

EL-SAYED: — it would be great if they improved that school.

DUTHIERS: — improve that school? What kind of message does that send to our allies, and our adversaries that the United States would not be willing to support a key ally in global strategy?

EL-SAYED: Well, I think it would send that we're about principle. If you're gonna use the money that we send you to do apartheid and genocide, then you should think twice about getting our funding, and also think about the message that that sends to families who are in need in our own communities. It says that we see you, you have been contributing to our tax base for a very long time, and you haven't been getting the deal that you deserve. It says that we really are about trying to make your life more affordable, trying to make sure that you have the resources you need, and it says that we believe you have the right to your tax dollars, and so, I think too often we're too worried about what something says to someone else we're not as worried about what we say to people who are struggling for the ability to afford the basic things that they need for a

dignified life. We are in an affordability crisis right now. It is high past time for us to prioritize spending on the things that make people whole, guaranteeing their health care, making sure that they have housing and good schools, making sure they can breathe, clean air and drink, clean water, standing up to the corporations and special interests who have corrupted our politics for far too long.

NISCHELLE TURNER: Dr. el-Sayed, Nischelle Turner here. You spoke just a minute ago about wanting to have a big coalition, but members of the Democratic establishment seemingly pulled together to try and defeat you — Chuck Schumer, Gretchen Whitmer, Jim Clyburn, all of those folks. What is your message to them today after seeing the race that you have run?

EL-SAYED: Look, we have an opportunity right now to remember what it is that we're up against. We're up against a historically corrupted President, a guy who made \$2.2 billion on his office in just the first year alone. We're up against a movement to squash democracy itself, and whatever we may differ on, it is so much smaller than what we agree on. So, I'm looking forward to locking arms to defeat Mike Rogers and to beat Trumpism, to hold him accountable for the next several years, and to elect a president who believes in the value of democracy, and wants to take on the responsibility, of providing people health care, and standing up for things like good schools, and opportunity in our country.

DUTHIERS: And so, doctor —

EL-SAYED: I hope that today we can come together.

DUTHIERS: — so — so, doctor, do you think that it's time for Chuck Schumer to step aside? Do you think that Chuck Schumer is — has the pulse of the Democratic Party?

EL-SAYED: Well, look, I've said very clearly that I think Senator Chris Van Hollen would be an amazing Senate majority leader, but right now, we have a job to do, and that's to beat Mike Rogers in the fall. That's what I'm focused on. I'm hoping that anybody and everybody who's committed to doing that comes together. I know Senator Schumer and I are united in that goal, and I'm looking forward to working together to get that done.

DUTHIERS: All right, Dr. Abdul el-Sayed. Thank you very much for spending some time with us this morning. We appreciate it.

EL-SAYED: Thank you.