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*CBS News*

# ***FACE THE NATION***

*Sunday, January 28, 2007*

**GUESTS:** Senator JIM WEBB (D-VA)  
Armed Services Committee

Senator MITCH McCONNELL (R-KY)  
Minority Leader

Senator ARLEN SPECTER (R-PA)  
Judiciary Committee

**MODERATOR:** BOB SCHIEFFER - CBS News

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***FACE THE NATION - CBS NEWS  
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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION, three views on the war in Iraq. The Senate is set for a crucial debate on the war, but will it make a difference? We'll talk with three senators, all with different views: Senator Jim Webb, Democrat from Virginia, who has a son in Iraq and who is opposed to the president's plan; Senator Arlen Specter, Republican from Pennsylvania, who says he is undecided; and Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican minority leader from Kentucky, he supports the president. I'll have a final word on the troops, which is a good thing, I think.

But first, deciding on Iraq on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer. And now, from CBS News in Washington, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And good morning again. Yesterday in Washington was like a day from yesteryear in a war that, to many, seems long ago and far away, the war in Vietnam. Yesterday hundreds of thousands of people descended on the Capitol to protest the war in Iraq. Some of them are young, some were those who marched and protested Vietnam. But like those who protested the Vietnam war, they came with many grievances. And this week many of those grievances will be heard not in the streets, but on the floor of the Senate as senators debate what should happen next there.

Our first guest this morning, Virginia Senator Jim Webb, fought in Vietnam as a Marine. His son is in Iraq today, and he opposes this war, as many Americans heard when he made the Democratic response to the State of the Union speech.

Senator, you came home to protest from the war you fought. How did you feel about these demonstrations yesterday?

Senator JIM WEBB (Democrat, Virginia; Armed Services Committee): I have a strong belief that in--that in this country, you know, one of our greatest strengths is that we have the right to stand in front of the people in power and state our views. And, just very quickly, I think one of the differences between right now and what was happening when you--in 1969, when you were first covering this, I was a company commander as a Marine in Vietnam. The turn--the turmoil in that period was a different sort of turmoil than it is here. That--you had the civil rights movement combining with the anti-war movement and the--sort of a revolutionary spirit. And a lot of it, quite frankly, had spilled over into the--to the area of irresponsibility. And, at the same time, the people who were supporting the Vietnam War--and I was one of them--believed strongly in the reasons that they were there. Eight years after the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, in 1972, the American people still agreed, by a--by a margin of 74-to-11 percent that it was important that South Vietnam not fall to the Communists.

What we have today is a specific situation, the Iraq war. And I do not oppose the Iraq war specifically. What I said, here, four years ago, almost to the

day, I was sitting with you, basically saying this was a strategic error, and I and a number of other people with long military background were saying that this was not good for the United States, that all these things that are happening now were going to happen. So what we have today is an American public by polling, by percentages that has turned strongly against this strategic effort, the lack of wisdom in the strategic effort. It's a different situation.

SCHIEFFER: In your response to the State of the Union, you said that, unless the president moves to end this war, and these are your words, Democrats will be showing him the way. Give us some details.

Sen. WEBB: Well, I think that the most important thing for a lot of people who I am aligned with on this to make clear is that we're not opposed to any specific plan, we're not opposed to the president's plan. What I object to is the fact that there isn't a plan, that there hasn't been a plan for four years. And this is almost just like a tipping point for a lot of people who are basically saying you cannot continue to give the administration a free hand in the manipulation of troop numbers without a clear end point to a strategy. I think one thing that I've seen over and over again here is that, when things go wrong, they go to the American military, that when all else fails, we decide we're going to throw more military people in, rather than trying to go into the political solutions, which are going to be the way that this is going to be resolved. I'm on the Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee in the Senate. We've had extensive hearings. And the preponderance of evidence among the experts is that this is going to be solved from the outside in with strong diplomatic overtones. And this administration's not going there. They refuse to go there.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what are the political solutions that you see?

Sen. WEBB: I've been saying for nearly three years, since April of '04, that we must get some sort of a Dayton-like accord, a regional accord, not simply inside Iraq, where the countries in the region can be brought to the table and assume ownership of the future of Iraq as it relates to the ethnic groups and communities inside Iraq, to which they have been historically allied. That is an approach this administration will not take. It continues to overly use the military side of it.

SCHIEFFER: The new secretary of defense says criticism of this policy emboldens the enemy, and Vice President Cheney made very clear the other day that your criticism of the president's policy is hogwash. What would you say in response to that?

Sen. WEBB: Well, I al--I already did respond to Vice President Cheney's comments. I mean, if you can look--go back and look at his record of comments all the way through this war, all of it has been off, all of it has been wrong. I think it is--I think it's wrong for the secretary of defense to say that what we're doing emboldens the enemy. First of all, who's the enemy? Who they talking about? Are they talking about Iran? Are they talking about the insurgents? Are they talking about al-Qaeda? This is a situation that's

similar to what we saw in Lebanon when I was over there as a journalist in the '80s. This is a five-sided problem now, and the way that you deal with a five-sided problem is boldly stepping forward and bringing them to the table so no one is on the outside and forcing some sort of a solution. At the same time, we continue to fight international terrorism, the terrorism that wasn't in Iraq before we started but that is there now, and terrorism outside of Iraq. We have lost the place in the world that we had when we began this because of what we did. And, you know, sometimes that takes a deep breath by national leaders to try to move things in a different way.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me ask you this. Number one, you're going to pass a resolution in the Senate--that seems to be what all the thinking is these days--criticizing in some way the president's policy to expand the force in Iraq. Should Congress, after that passes, if it has no impact on the president and he says he intends to go forward, should Congress begin to think of taking stronger actions like containing or putting limits on funding for this war in some way?

Sen. WEBB: I think--I think you will see other congressional actions. I think what you're going to see first of all is a sense of the Congress that they are in disagreement with the leadership of the administration, having given this administration four years to try to come up with a strategy where there's a clearly articulable end point, which we don't have now, that's the problem so many people have. I'm very concerned about how reconstruction funds have been used, more than \$30 billion. A lot of it's gone to sweetheart deals to American companies. A lot of it's unaccounted for. I've said very clearly I'm going to start putting my lamp shade on, or whatever they call those things...

SCHIEFFER: Eyeshade.

Sen. WEBB: ...eyeshade and going after these programs. I spent four years on a defense resources board, you know, breaking down these sorts of things. And we're going to really go at it. Now, I would like to say one other thing, because I think it's really important to the debate. Before these hearings began, Senator John McCain is a long-time friend of mine, I have great respect for him, pulled me aside, and he basically said, 'We have to conduct this debate in a way that does not impugn the patriotism of either side.' And I hope Senator McCain and others will remember that. Because what I have been seeing over this last week is something from the other side on this that--that--that borders on irresponsibility. I don't believe that there is any politician who has the right to say that he or she is speaking for the troops, for the military. Our military is as diverse politically as our country is, and it's--it's wrong to say we're going to let--let our military people down in terms of winning if we start taking this in a different direction. What we're doing is trying to define specifically how this could be a win.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Senator, I want to leave it right there. And I want to turn to another senator who is in Elizabeth, New Jersey, today to celebrate the birthday of his sister, Senator Arlen Specter.

Senator Specter, you have not said yet how you intend to vote on these resolutions that are coming. Had you--will you make a decision this week? Can you tell us this morning which way you're leaning?

Senator ARLEN SPECTER (Republican, Pennsylvania; Judiciary Committee): I'm going to wait until we debate it on the floor. The Senate has a reputation for being the world's greatest deliberative body. I think we ought to deliberate on it. On this state of the record, Bob, I cannot support sending additional troops to Iraq. And I say that, and I respect what Senator Webb has had to say, but I disagree with him when he says there is no plan. There is a plan, but the plan isn't working. And the plan is not working because it requires Iraq to do some things which Iraq doesn't have the will or the capability to do, and that is to stifle the sectarian disagreements and also to secure Baghdad. Those are two conditions set down by President Bush in his State of the Union speech, and the Iraqis simply cannot do that. We have, a few weeks ago opinions by the military that they did not want additional troops to go in. And if there was some path to victory, I--I'm willing to consider it. But you have a situation and a representative democracy where the people spoke. Now, the election results were resounding. And now you have a lot of concerns expressed by the--by the Congress. And there's an overlay here of concern that the administration has tried to expand executive power beyond the appropriate range of checks and balances in the surveillance program, in the signing statements. And key figures in the administration have been very blunt about wanting more executive authority. And I believe that the debate which is coming up is very healthy, and I agree with Senator Webb on not impugning people's patriotism or saying that it's going to embolden the enemy. That's the cost of a democracy, and that's a price worth paying in a democracy. And we have a Constitution which says the Congress raises and maintains armies. And in the Constitution, there's a specification that the funding cannot be for more than two years, which shows the constitutional balance, which is above the president and above the Congress that we have a duty to take a look at whether the funding is being wisely spent.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me just ask you then the obvious follow-up, senator. Are you, then, prepared to begin cutting off funds for this effort if the president does not begin to--or if he tries to send more troops to Iraq? Are you talking about the troops that are already on the way or an additional number of troops when you say you're against sending more?

Sen. SPECTER: Well, I'm talking about the surge of 21,000 more. Whenever we talk about funding, Bob, we have to have as our base of premise that we'll do nothing to endanger the troops who are there.

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm.

Sen. SPECTER: It is premature to talk about cutting off funding because we have to see what the Congress is going to do on the resolutions. And the president is influenced by what is happening, and the president has called us in. I was at a meeting with the president, in a meeting with National

Security Counselor Hadley, and the president is not going to change his policy until he changes his policy. And he changed his policy on surveillance. And that's another long story, which I worked on for more than a year to bring it under judicial supervision. So watch the contours as to--as to what develops.

But there are precedents for cutting off funding, as to Cambodia, as to Laos, as to Vietnam. And in 1974, the legislation required that there be no more than 4,000 troops in Vietnam within six months, and 3,000 within a year. So there are precedents. But we have to handle that very gingerly

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. SPECTER: ...so as not to destabilize Iraq and not to endanger our troops.

SCHIEFFER: Senator, we have to stop there because we're very tight on time this morning, but I think we got your position on the record here. We'll be back in a second to talk to the Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And we're back now with the Senate Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, who will have his hands full this week because he's the man who's going to try to keep the Republicans in the Senate behind the president, and their--in--and in support of the effort that's going on now in Iraq.

You just heard what Senator Specter said, Senator McConnell. He said he cannot support--although he hasn't decided how he's going to vote on any of...

Senator MITCH McCONNELL (Republican, Kentucky; Minority Leader): Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: ...these resolutions--he can't support sending more troops to Iraq. What's your response?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, I think The Washington Post had it right the other day. They said the Senate's about to confirm General Petraeus overwhelmingly, which we did the next day, but they want to tell him his mission can't succeed. What I'll be doing is trying to appeal to my Republican colleagues to not pass a nonbinding resolution that basically says to the troops who are going there this is a mission that doesn't have a chance of succeeding.

I will say this, though, Bob. I think I can pretty well speak for virtually all Republican senators when I say this is the last chance for the Iraqis to step up and do their part. This effort to quiet Baghdad is absolutely essential. If you don't have a relatively calm capital city, there's no chance the government can function properly. So this is their last chance. And I think a resolution in the Senate is--that sets up some benchmarks, some milestones that the Iraqi government has to meet--if there is to be a resolution, and I think there will be one--is the best way to go.

SCHIEFFER: Well, how long do they have? When you say this is the...

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, I don't think we...

SCHIEFFER: ...last chance?

Sen. McCONNELL: I don't think we want to put a timetable on it. But everybody understands that this needs to succeed, and it needs to succeed soon. The definition of success being a capital city calm enough for the government to engage in the kind of political compromises that need to be made. It's pretty hard to engage in political compromise when bombs are going off everywhere. So you have to have some degree of calm before any of this has a chance to work, and it needs to work sometime soon.

SCHIEFFER: Now, you're talking about a resolution that would set benchmarks for the Iraqis. In other words, they have to do X by--will you put a date in that, by a certain time? Or what would those benchmarks be, Senator?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, General Petraeus said the other day, obviously in a perfect world, he'd prefer no resolution at all. But if we had a resolution that made it clear that the Iraqis were expected to do certain things, it might be helpful to him. It'd give him something to--to--to point to in dealing with the Iraqis. You've got to do this, this and this in order to make this work. So...

SCHIEFFER: But will you put dates into this? They have to do this by...

Sen. McCONNELL: I doubt if we'll have a...

SCHIEFFER: ...April 15th or something?

Sen. McCONNELL: ...date in there, but I think they got the message. If someone like me, who's been the strongest supporter of the president you could find in the Senate on this effort, is saying this is the last chance for the Iraqis, I think that ought to help them get the message. This is the last chance.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what happens if it fails then?

Sen. McCONNELL: We're not going to talk about failure, we're going to talk about success. You know, one thing that a lot of people have forgotten is going on offense after 9/11 has been a huge success.

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm.

Sen. McCONNELL: The principal reason we went on offense was to protect us here at home. Who would have thought that after five years we'd not been attacked again here at home? That part has been a 100 percent success. It has been, however, much more difficult to establish the kind of government in Iraq that we had hoped. It's been challenging of late in Afghanistan. But we don't want to allow these places, Bob, to become once again where these

elements, like al-Qaeda, can operate with impunity, and then be prepared to launch attacks on us again here in America.

SCHIEFFER: I understand what you're saying, but if you're going to tell him 'This is it, buddy,' doesn't he have to know what he faces if he doesn't get the job done?

Sen. McCONNELL: Oh, I think they've got a pretty good understanding of what happens.

SCHIEFFER: Well, Senator Specter's talking about perhaps there will be tougher measures down the line, the Senate may have to consider cutting off funding.

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, I think what'll happen, when we have the supplemental appropriation--that's the money, that's the real thing...

SCHIEFFER: Mm-hmm.

Sen. McCONNELL: ...I expect that there will be debates about cutting off funds at that time, and that's a few months down the road. And so the Iraqis can expect--can expect that that debate is going to occur in the House and Senate in the--in the very near future. They got a big stake.

SCHIEFFER: In other words, you would consider putting conditions on how some of those funds would be spent?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, I think many senators will, yes. I think many senators will. I think we'll be voting on those kinds of measures.

SCHIEFFER: Well, do you think they will actually do that?

Sen. McCONNELL: I'm not going to...

SCHIEFFER: Would you say right now that there's...

Sen. McCONNELL: I'm not going to speculate about what...

SCHIEFFER: ...there are votes in the Senate to do that?

Sen. McCONNELL: ...the conditions are going to be like three or four months from now or six months from now. What I'm hoping is, we're going to have a success here that what--that people will begin to understand.

SCHIEFFER: There was some talk in the beginning about perhaps filibustering one of these resolutions. You have now decided not to do that, have you not?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, if you mean by filibuster, preventing a vote, that was never in the cards. But 41 senators--and we have 49 Republicans--more than 41 senators on our side will insist on a fair process that will ensure that we have several votes, all of which will be subject to a 60-vote threshold like

they always are in the Senate. I mean that's--that's routine business in the Senate.

SCHIEFFER: So, for those out there who are not schooled in all of the intricacies of how the Senate works, what you're saying is, all you want is a chance to vote on several resolutions, not just one resolution?

Sen. McCONNELL: That's correct. Right. I mean, it's never been in the cards that we would not vote on something this important. It's the most important issue in the country. What we will insist on, however, which you can do under Senate procedures, is there be several options so senators will have a choice.

SCHIEFFER: I see. Now, your Republican colleague, Senator Warner, one of the wisest voices and most influential in the Senate, is going to present a resolution that says the Senate does not agree with the president's plan to expand the force in Iraq.

Sen. McCONNELL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think that that resolution will pass? And how many Republicans do you think will vote for that resolution, keeping in mind that you're also going to have another resolution?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, Senator Warner's obviously one of our great authorities on military matters, very respected member of the Senate. I happen not to share his view that this resolution at this particular time is helpful, and I hope not many Republicans will vote for that particular resolution.

SCHIEFFER: It--in your mind, though, it probably will pass, will it not?

Sen. McCONNELL: Well, I don't--I am not certain that any of these will get 60 votes. We'll find out in the coming week or two.

SCHIEFFER: Senator McConnell, thank you so much for being with us.

Sen. McCONNELL: Thank you, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: Back in a second.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, during the court martial scene in the movie "A Few Good Men," young Navy prosecutor Tom Cruise put Marine colonel Jack Nicholson on the stand and demanded the truth. Nicholson replied, "The truth? You can't handle the truth." A memorable line, but we are left to ask, has the government concluded Nicholson's character was right, that Americans can't handle the truth? As the war has grown worse, we have heard government spokesmen from the top on down tell us "stuff happens," "mission's accomplished," "enormous progress," "the good news is just not being

reported." We can't even get a straight story on how our troops are dying. Last week the Pentagon first reported that four Americans were killed in Iraq while repelling an enemy attack. Then on Friday we were told they had actually been kidnapped during a shootout and executed, two of them handcuffed and shot in the head. In the hours after the killings, reporters, who had pieced together the real story, were told their version was inaccurate. The new secretary of defense claimed he was unaware of the new information just an hour before it was announced.

The government argues that public criticism hurts the war effort. But it is being damaged much more by its own loss of credibility brought on by such incidents. Truth is the foundation of democracy, and Americans can handle the truth. They demand it. History shows that, when they fail to get it, they no longer follow their leaders no matter what the cause. They are more likely to just change leaders.

That's our broadcast. We hope you'll join us next week when we'll be at the Super Bowl in Miami talking football with the NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, Dan Marino, Phil Simms, and our friend Jim Nance. Until then, thanks for watching.