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CBS News

FACE THE NATION

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**GUESTS: Sen. CARL LEVIN (D-MI)
Chairman, Armed Services Committee**

**Sen. JEFF SESSIONS (R-AL)
Member, Armed Services Committee**

**KIMBERLY DOZIER
CBS News Correspondent**

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, as we mark another Memorial Day, the US command in Iraq announces the deaths of eight more American troops. The month of May will be one of the costliest yet for Americans in Iraq, and the new casualties mean nearly 1,000 military people have died there since Memorial Day last year. Friday the president signed new legislation to continue the war until October. But will Congress give him another go-ahead after that if things don't get better? We'll go first to Baghdad and our chief foreign correspondent Lara Logan. Then we'll talk with the Democratic chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, Carl Levin, and Republican Jeff Sessions. Then we'll turn to CBS correspondent Kimberly Dozier, who was gravely wounded last Memorial Day. She's made a miraculous recovery, and she's here to talk about it. I'll have a final word on the Iraq debate, and is it still about all the wrong things?

But first, the story from Baghdad 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. We start this morning in Baghdad, where our CBS News chief foreign correspondent Lara Logan has just arrived for another tour there.

Lara, I know you have just come from briefings with US military officials. What's your assessment at this point? Is it better, worse, or about the same as when you left?

LARA LOGAN reporting:

Well, I can tell you, Bob, I've only been gone about six weeks, and just the drive from the airport into Baghdad itself was really visually disturbing. You could sense there was a dramatic change in the feeling in the city itself. It looks like a wasteland. The drive really reminded me of something out of Armageddon. But talking to US military officers, they say they are measures here that they regard as indicators of progress, as moving in the right direction. And one particularly that they point to is the fact that there's been around a 50 percent drop in the number of Iraqi civilian deaths in the capital itself. And they say that that shows that they are having an affect on the different networks in the city, and that is a measure they say is particularly important, of course, to the Iraqi people. Even though attacks on US forces are dramatically up since the surge began, they say that that is to be expected, because there are a lot more US troops out there. And what Iraqi people really care about is do they feel safer in their neighborhoods? They're not as concerned about attacks on US forces as they are about attacks on their own people, their own communities. And the US military says they want the Iraqis feeling safer. So they take that as a sign of progress, even though, from the outside, it looks to people back home that if there are more US soldiers dying here, then things can't be better.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I have to bring that up, because certainly we have more US deaths announced. We have now had nearly 1,000 American military killed just since last Memorial Day. It does not seem to be any safer for the American troops.

LOGAN: No, certainly not. Already this month there have been 101 soldiers and Marines killed here. And that's one of the worst months on record for the US military. There's definitely a concerted effort to attack US forces. In fact, IEDs--improvised explosive devices--have remained consistently bad around the city. And it's from IEDs and small arms fire that most US soldiers are still dying here. Some of them--Bob, one very interesting point that was made to me by one of our own security forces here, that one of the big IEDs that killed six or seven soldiers just recently was buried under concrete. So for an explosion

of that kind to rip through not just the concrete, but to flip a Bradley armored fighting vehicle over onto its side, it had to be an incredibly powerful explosion. And how on earth could you possibly defend against something like that, that's buried under the concrete of a road? So, I mean, there's no doubt that's what's happening here is the insurgents are adapting their tactics. And that is one of the most telling indicators of the surge: How effectively is the so-called enemy adapting and changing and altering its strategy in response to what US forces are doing? That will be the real measure of what kind of difference the surge is making here. And the very telling signs are is that they're adapting quickly, more quickly than ever, and they are regenerating faster than ever.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Lara Logan. Well, be very careful, Lara. Thank you so much.

And joining us now from Detroit, Senator Carl Levin; from Mobile, Alabama, Senator Jeff Sessions.

Senator JEFF SESSIONS (Republican, Alabama; Armed Services Committee): Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I must say, Senator Levin, when the enemy is burying bombs in concrete and they're still powerful enough to overturn a humvee vehicle, an armored vehicle, that's not very good news.

Senator CARL LEVIN (Democrat, Michigan; Chairman, Armed Services Committee): Well, it's just further proof, Bob, that there is no military solution to the conflict in Iraq. There's only a political solution. And there is no evidence that the Iraqi politicians are making any progress towards that political solution. The whole purpose of this surge which the president announced was that it would give the Iraqis an opportunity to reach a political session. They have not done so. That is the measure of success of the surge, and it seems to me the only way--the only way that we know of to force the Iraqi politicians to reach political solution is to let them know that the open-ended commitment of American troops is over, that we're going to begin to leave in 120 days. That's what the majority of the US Senate and the House of Representatives voted for. That's what the president vetoed, is--was that putting into place that timeline of the beginning of the reduction of American troops in 120 days, changing the mission to a support mission, and also making sure that our troops are ready and that they have proper training and equipment.

SCHIEFFER: Yes.

Sen. LEVIN: That was part of the Democratic alternative, which the president vetoed.

SCHIEFFER: But, Senator Levin, the Congress went ahead last week and gave the president the money to go ahead and continue fighting the war, at least through September. Is that an indication, in your mind, that Congress simply does not have the power to stop this war?

Sen. LEVIN: Well, what it is an indication of is we're going to support the troops. There's no difference between Democrats and Republicans on that point. When those troops are there and they're in harm's way, we are not going to either cut funding or prohibit funding for our troops. We're together on that. The big divide between Democrats and Republicans, which was shown in that vote for a bill which the president vetoed, is the Democrats are determined to tell the Iraqi leaders that their dawdling has got to end. The open-ended commitment's over and that we are going to begin to reduce our presence in 120 days as a way of forcing them to take responsibility for their own country. That's where the difference is. But as long as those troops are in harm's way, then most Democrats, 70 percent of us in the Senate, are going to vote to provide them funding.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me get to Senator Sessions. Senator Sessions, I want to ask you about something your Republican leader in the Senate, Mitch McConnell, said last week while all of this debate over funding this was going on, and he said, quote, "The handwriting is on the wall. We are headed in a

different direction in the fall in Iraq, and the president is going to be the one to lead the way." That sounds like a different strategy. What is he talking about?

Sen. SESSIONS: Well, I think most of us--I think almost all of us really understood this surge to mean just that. Frankly, the last brigade is not even in Iraq yet. But by September, when General Petraeus is to make a report, I think most of the people in Congress believe, unless something extraordinary occurs, that we should be on a move to draw that surge number down. I don't believe we need a soldier in Iraq a single day longer than is necessary to serve our national interests. We've had a tough year, there's no doubt about it. In 2005 General Casey thought we could draw down troops in 2006, and we've not been able to do that. But this government in Iraq has got to step up, and we've got to be able to draw our troop levels down, to be in a more supportive role, an embedding role, a training role, and they've got to defend their own country.

We also need to ask what is the impact--what context are we looking at in the overall war on terrorism here? I mean, what does Iraq mean? There's no doubt if we're not successful in Iraq, the initiative will move to the al-Qaeda, the radical jihadists that are--will attack around the world. So peace will not occur just by drawing our troops home. It will really embolden the enemy. So the best solution is to get this Iraqi government up, get them to preserve their own integrity as a nation, and to defend themselves. And that's a very important thing to achieve.

SCHIEFFER: Senator, I don't want to read too much or put words into your mouth, but, listening to you, what you seem to be saying, and tell me if I'm wrong here, is that if things don't change dramatically on the ground in Iraq by September that Republicans are no longer going to be able to support keeping more American troops in Iraq, that at that point we'll have to begin thinking about some sort of a withdrawal timetable. Is that what you're saying here?

Sen. SESSIONS: I'm thinking that we need to reach a bipartisan understanding if it's any way possible. And I was glad we got this supplemental resolution passed. Any delay beyond this last week would have been very bad in my opinion for our troops' morale and for our overall efforts. So we have to be realistic. We have to know that we can't achieve everything we'd like to achieve. We have a limited number of men and women we can send to Iraq and we can't overburden them. And so we're facing some tough choices. If we do the thing right, we need to listen. My first thought is that we absolutely need to listen to General Petraeus whose written the book on how to defeat an--a counterinsurgency for the military. He's spent almost three of his last four years in Iraq. He's a brilliant leader and a Princeton PhD. So I believe we--I believe we need to listen to his advice as we go into the fall.

SCHIEFFER: What you seem to be saying, though, senator, that we're going to have to think of another kind of strategy, and that is what your leader, Mitch McConnell, was saying. What would a different kind of strategy be?

Sen. SESSIONS: I don't think we need to be an occupying power. This is a fine line we've walked, and this surge has got to be temporary. We do not need to be and cannot be perceived as just occupying Iraq for any extended period of time. General Abizaid always was concerned about that. I shared his concerns. But because of the violence in the capital city of Baghdad, we had to take a bitter pill, and this Congress has supported General Petraeus and the step up for a surge for a temporary period.

SCHIEFFER: Senator Levin, I'm going to get to you in just a second. But hearing Senator Sessions, I have to ask this additional follow-up. Do you think the president gets it? Do you think he is where you are on this, Senator Sessions?

Sen. SESSIONS: You asking me?

SCHIEFFER: Yes, sir.

Sen. SESSIONS: I think he is coming around to that. A note in the , I believe, The New York Times yesterday that top defense officials are talking about a major reduction in 2008 in the number of troops, and they're working on plans that would be harmonious with that concept. I certainly hope that's will occur. We cannot sustain this level, in my opinion, in Iraq and Afghanistan much longer.

SCHIEFFER: Well, Senator Levin, of course Senator Sessions is one of the--proudly, one of the most conservative members of the Senate. He comes from a Southern state where the president has been very popular over the past. What do you make of what your colleague has just said here this morning?

Sen. LEVIN: Well, not only is he, obviously, beginning to make a move, I think, but more importantly is Republican leaders. But your quote of Mitch McConnell, just listen to what he says. "There's going to be a change of direction in September. The handwriting's on the wall." Why wait till September? We've got men and women dying in Iraq right now. Why not make that change in course right now? We know it has to come. We know the Iraqi leaders have to take responsibility for their own country. What the--what the president has done is hedge. He will not say that unless the Iraqi political leaders reach a political settlement in the next X number of days that we will take certain steps. That's what the Iraq Study Group said. The Iraq Study Group said there must be no ambiguity, no ambiguity about the fact that, unless the Iraqi political leaders make the political compromises that are essential to end the violence, that there will be a consequence in the reduction of American support militarily, politically and economically.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. LEVIN: There must be no ambiguity. This president is totally ambiguous, and he doesn't get it.

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Sen. LEVIN: He talks about the Iraq political leaders needing to do something, but he won't say what they must do or what the consequences would be.

SCHIEFFER: All right, senator. I want to thank both of you for a very informative discussion this morning. I think we've probably made some news here. We're coming back in a minute to talk to Kimberly Dozier.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: It was early last Memorial Day that we got the news that every newsroom dreads: Kimberly Dozier, our correspondent in Iraq, and her camera crew had been hit by a roadside bomb. Later that morning we would learn that the camera team--Paul Douglas and James Brolan--had died from their wounds. Kimberly was near death. She'd lost 30 pints of blood, had no pulse when they brought her in, and the fear was that, if she lived, she'd lose both her legs. Somehow they kept her alive and, after more than two dozen surgeries, she is not only recovered, she is walking without a cane and she is ready to go back to work. Kimberly is with us this morning.

Welcome, Kimberly. What a year for you. Did you ever, at some point over this last year, think you wouldn't be here?

Ms. KIMBERLY DOZIER (CBS News Correspondent): Well, when I say it's very good to be here, I now finally know what that means. I understand only in retrospect, by talking to some of my surgeons,

how close I came. It was months before I knew that my heart stopped twice, that I'd lost almost all, if not all of my blood. And if not for the soldiers from the patrol that had just been hit, who brought all the wounded in--if they hadn't lined up and given blood--I was in a touch and go situation. The Baghdad casualty hospital had run out of blood, and there were several badly injured people--six other soldiers, two as badly injured as I was. And they came through for us.

SCHIEFFER: The doctors gave their own blood, if memory serves.

Ms. DOZIER: I think anyone who could, anyone who wasn't busy working on someone, gave blood.

SCHIEFFER: Tuesday you're going to be part of a CBS News documentary to be broadcast at 10 PM Eastern time. Kimberly, we want to show a segment here about how you felt when you went back to Iraq just a little over a year ago.

(Excerpt from documentary)

SCHIEFFER: You and I talked just before--in New York, just before you went back to Baghdad, and you talked about what you wanted to do and what you hoped to accomplish there. And I remember that, once you got there, you went out on Memorial Day because you wanted to show that war did not take a holiday. And then this is what happened.

(Excerpt from documentary)

SCHIEFFER: You--and that, of course, is what happened. You tell, in this documentary, that--not only your story, but what happened to so many of those people who were around you, including that young man. How's he doing?

Ms. DOZIER: That's Sergeant Justin Farrar. Justin was just next to me when the bomb went off. Now, his normal position would have been at his captain's side. Captain Alex Funkhouser is the man we were following that day. But the captain had said, 'You stay back with the reporter.' And that is the only reason he is still alive, and he thinks about that every day. He's had a real hard time. He knows he was following his orders, but he says his place was next to his officer, to somehow try to keep him alive.

SCHIEFFER: Do you have any memory of that day at all?

Ms. DOZIER: Absolutely. I remember interviewing Captain Funkhouser, real optimistic guy, even though he was pretty blunt about the problems he faced. We were going out to see areas that were being handed over to Iraqi control, and this was the first stop. Captain Funkhouser wanted to check out an incident that had happened in that area the day before. He wanted to talk to Iraqis on the street. We were outside of our humvees. We found a group of Iraqis to talk to. And my last memory before the bomb went off was the captain shooting ahead of me and heading towards a group of Iraqis at a T-stand, where his translator was. If the captain had stayed talking and just walking with me, I wouldn't be here today because, essentially whoever, was watching waited until Captain Funkhouser, his translator and Paul and James, my cameraman and soundman, were right in the kill zone of the car bomb, and they detonated it.

SCHIEFFER: You--after that, of course, they took you to the field hospital, where you really had no pulse and all of that. Somehow, some way, you were brought back to life, really.

Ms. DOZIER: Well, the amazing thing is what happened on the ground. It took something like 45 minutes to get us out of there to the casualty hospital because there were so many incidents happening in the area that the medevac team had trouble finding us. They stopped at another car bomb on the way to us. And it

was a patrol of the Iowa National Guard, they just happened to be driving through the area when the bomb went off. They screeched to a halt, whipped back around and ran through the flaming vehicles to treat everyone on the ground. So between the 4th Infantry Division patrol guys still left standing and the Iowa National Guard guys, everyone took a man--or me--and started working on us. So it's a young staff sergeant, Staff Sergeant Jeremy Koch, no medical training except his basic field hospital training that every soldier gets, who tied the tourniquets on me that kept me alive.

SCHIEFFER: You tell in the documentary about what they took out of you. Your recovery was nothing short of miraculous. In this documentary, you talk to Katie Couric about what hit you.

(Beginning of excerpt from "Flashpoint")

Ms. DOZIER: So in Landstuhl, they first handed me this. And, let's see. This is what was in my head.

KATIE COURIC reporting:

It's like a bullet. It's so sharp.

Ms. DOZIER: It did limited damage in one area. This is what did all the damage in my right leg.

COURIC: This, it seems, could be completely deadly. This was part of the car bomb.

Ms. DOZIER: Yeah, this was--the car itself becomes a projectile. Its bits get blown into anyone around it. That is part of what ripped apart my right leg and nicked my femoral artery and nearly killed me.

(End of excerpt)

SCHIEFFER: So you went through what so many of our wounded have gone through, you and your family. And we think of their families as we think about this. Kimberly, what would you like to say to them today on this Memorial Day?

Ms. DOZIER: To my family, well, they pulled me through. My family and my loved ones are the reason I healed so fast. They stayed by my side. And the doctors say they see with every soldier, Marine, airman, when they're able to have their families next to them, they just heal that much faster.

One of the things I found out is, not only did I go through an experience like the other soldiers and troops in this conflict, but my injuries are identical to what's happening to about 82 percent of the wounded troops coming out of Iraq. We all have blast injuries to our arms and our legs, and what I've discovered as I've talked to the doctors in the course of this, there are a number of medical mysteries that our injuries are presenting that they don't know exactly how to treat. So, when everyone thought the danger was past for me, I actually had teams of doctors coming to me saying, `You have this problem. You have this Iraqi bacteria. It's going to possibly kill you, but the drug to treat it will kill your kidneys. Choose." So now I've been working with some of my surgeons to call for more extremity injury research to try to solve these problems so some of the soldiers in that situation don't have to face the same questions I did.

SCHIEFFER: Well, we're glad to have you back, Kimberly.

Final word in just a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, I had breakfast the other day with the ambassador from one of America's strongest and closest allies. We got to talking about Iraq and Vietnam, and he asked me what I thought the great lessons of those years had been. I said, first, that we can help people but we can't do it for them. And second, that America leads best when it leads by example, when we demonstrate how our system works by practicing what we preach, not by resorting to the methods of those who oppose us. 'May I suggest one more thing,' he said, 'that America is most successful when it does not work alone, but with its friends. America has the strongest economy in the world and, without question, the most powerful military. But when it has tried to work alone, it has seldom been able to work its will. Yet when it has been able to forge broad coalitions, it has seldom failed.' That's more than opinion, it's just a fact, which makes me wonder, even at this 11th hour, shouldn't that be the focus of our Iraq policy, to bring together a broad coalition of Western nations and Iraq's neighbors to contain the war and pressure its warring factions to settle their differences? Instead, we have paid lip service to diplomacy and made the debate about battlefield tactics as we search for a military solution to a political problem. So far we haven't found one.

If you'd like to do more than just remember those who serve in the armed forces on this Memorial Day, I invite you to contact three fine organizations who help our wounded and their families: The Walter Reed Society, Fisher House, and the Yellow Ribbon Fund. You'll find all of them on the Web.

That's it for us. We'll see you next week.