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TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "CBS NEWS' FACE THE NATION."



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TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, America and the aftermath of Tucson.

PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA: I want our democracy to be as good as Christina imagined it. I want a miracle.

BOB SCHIEFFER: The President recalled the hope of nine-year-old Christina Green, the Tucson gunman's youngest victim as he calls for a new civility in our national debate. But can it happen or will this awful event drive us further apart? We'll ask Rudy Giuliani, the man who came to be called America's Mayor in the wake of 9/11. Pennsylvania's outgoing Governor Ed Rendell and Arizona Republican Congressman Jeff Flake. Then we'll bring in two of wounded Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords' close friends New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Florida Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Shultz.

On this week that marks the fiftieth anniversary of John Kennedy's inaugural, I'll have some thoughts on the chain of violence from the Kennedy assassination to the events of last week.

But first, has Tucson changed the debate on FACE THE NATION.

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

BOB SCHIEFFER: And, good morning again. We're going to begin this morning with the-- the wounded Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords. Two of her closest friends in the Congress, New York Senator Kirsten Gillibrand is with me here in the studio, Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Shultz is in her home state of Florida.

Senator, first, you talked to the family last night. How is the congresswoman doing?

SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND (D-New York): She-- she's doing great. And, you know, when I was there visiting with her, I was telling her how proud I am of her because she is right now inspiring the nation. She epitomizes everything that President Obama said in his speech about a way of moving forward, of providing leadership that brings people together, not pushing them apart and focuses on solutions. And that's who Gabby is. And right now through this struggle, which she will overcome, she's showing raw courage, raw strength something that we can all get behind and she really is our glimmer of hope in-- in a very dark time.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Now it's my understanding they have taken her off the ventilator but she of course is still in critical condition--

SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND: Yes.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --and she has not spoken at this point.

SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND: No. But she can move both parts-- both sides of her body. She can breathe. She's showing people that she can communicate well by, you know, holding our hands and moving her arms and her legs and-- and looking at us. So she's making great progress.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Congresswoman Wasserman Shultz, you actually went out to the hospital yesterday.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SHULTZ (D-Florida): I did.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What's the situation out there?

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SHULTZ: Well, you know, it was wonderful after Kirsten and I were able to be with her Wednesday when she first opened her eyes to-- to see her again yesterday without the breathing tube and with-- without a lot of the apparatus that had been, you know, on her a-- a few days before that. She continues to make, you know, very good progress. And neurologically, she's a-- she-- she's in, you know, in good shape better-- a little bit better shape every day. Kirsten is absolutely right. This is a woman who has the grit and the will and determination, more than anyone that-- that we know. And, it-- it's just-- we were just really overjoyed to be able to be there for our friend and-- and help to urge her on to come back to us, to her family, to her constituents in the 8th District of Arizona.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. I'm going to ask both of you--

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SHULTZ (overlapping): And I was able to see the staff too. So--

BOB SCHIEFFER: I'm going to ask--

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SHULTZ (overlapping): --that was really wonderful and--

BOB SCHIEFFER: Oh, well, thank you, congresswoman. I'm going to ask both of you to stand by here. I want to talk about the outlook in Congress which starts debate this week on repealing health care legislation. But I want to broaden the discussion if I can now at this point beyond Washington and the Beltway. And I want to bring in the man who many people in the hours after 9/11, because of the way he-- he did his job as Mayor of New York, he became known as America's Mayor. I want to talk to him first and also to outgoing Pennsylvania Governor Ed Rendell. We want to get his take on where he thinks the country is right now, after this awful event.

But-- but first to you, Mister Mayor and I-- I just kind of feel comfortable calling you that. You know, the country did seem to come together after 9/11. And-- but this time, when this awful thing happened in the hours, first hours after it, it seem like it might drive us further apart. Why-- why do you think that was?

RUDY GIULIANI (Former New York City Mayor): Well, you know, it-- it is very interesting difference. In the first moments after this, there was a rush to judgment on both sides. You know, left wingers trying to blame it on right wing, Tea Party, Sarah Palin. Right wingers trying to fight back and-- and defend themselves against what was really an outrageous-- an outrageous charge. And-- and-- but the reality is that that settled pretty quickly when we learned the history. And I thought the President's speech put it on a different tone. And I think we have a chance even though a couple of days later, I think we have a chance to do the same thing that we did after September 11th. You know, it-- it moved me greatly that Christina Green was born on September 11th. And I feel a personal connection to her-- her granddad was a manager of the Mets and the Yankees as-- as well. And this young lady was very taken by the fact that she

was born on September 11th. So maybe-- maybe now we can learn things from it. I think there's a real opportunity to try to have more civil discourse. And, although, the lack of civil discourse wasn't the cause of this as some people thought, the benefits we can get from civil discourse will allow us to solve a problem like this, which I believe, if we want to be perfectly logical about it, the problem that helped to cause this is our inability to deal with mental illness and our inability to deal with it as a society. You know, we always have these problems. We have a set of rights in this country, very important. Then we have a set of problems. How you balance addressing those problems against the rights that we have. We had to make that adjustment as Ed Rendell knows. He's-- he's a big part of it. We had to make that adjustment to make cities safer. Maybe we have to make that adjustment now to deal with mental illness. This man was crying out for someone who needed to be treated. He was being told to be treated. People were saying he was bizarre. People were saying he was frightening. A teacher wouldn't be with him without a guard being there. Gosh, you would think at some point along the way he'd have been evaluated. And it isn't an isolated incident. We could go back and look at lots of incidents like this where people weren't being treated.

Senator Gillibrand's predecessor Senator Moynihan is the one who explain this to me a long time ago when I was a mayor. He used to say, you know, in the sixties they let everyone out of the insane asylums, he called them. And he said that was a good thing because a lot of them didn't belong there but there was supposed to be a follow up which was treatment in the community. Monitoring, medicines and that follow up has never taken place. Well, maybe that follow up is de-- needed now. And that would probably be the most relevant response to this-- this tragedy that-- that-- that almost took the life of a really fine congresswoman, who can have a great future and did take some lives, including a very young one.

BOB SCHIEFFER: When you-- when you were the mayor, you were pretty strong on control, for example, of handguns. Do you think it is time to reexamine the gun laws? We're not taking-- talking about taking people's guns away from them--people who are qualified to have guns. But is there a need to find some way to keep guns out of the hands of people like Mister Loughner?

RUDY GIULIANI: Well, I mean, it-- it would seem to me that you'd-- you'd-- you'd addressed this with the most relevant problem first. The most relevant problem was the lack of an ability to deal with what was apparently paranoid schizophrenia or schizophrenia that should have been treated. Then I would re-establish a situation of civility which we seem to be doing so we can talk to each other about gun laws without yelling at each other. We do those first two things, I think we could take a look at gun laws and see what can be done that doesn't affect the constitutional rights that people have to have guns. The right they have to protect themselves. I mean, there are people that would argue that if more people had guns, this may not have happened, because somebody might have been able to take action immediately and stop-- and stopped him before he-- he inflicted either damage or as much damage as he did. We've got a very strong debate on guns. We're going to need a level of civility to discuss it that leads to rationality. I think we should also discuss immigration if we could get ourselves to the point of not demonizing each other over it. But I think the critical thing is let's see if we can act rationally and on point. Most important thing that would have prevented this is if this Loughner had been identified as what he clearly was. And there's something wrong in a society where we have so many of these situations. We had the-- the-- the Major Nidal, you know a year-and-a-half ago. Major Nidal for three years in the army was indicating a desire to-- to participate in Jihad. And we promoted him in the army. I mean, we're-- we're making a big mistake here not changing our procedures with regard to mental illness and then some form of involuntary appraisal of people who-- who display situations where teachers have to have guards there to protect themselves.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Mister Mayor, what was your reaction to the way that Sarah Palin reacted to all of this? You mentioned your--

RUDY GIULIANI (overlapping): My reaction to what-- what Sarah-- what Sarah Palin did was somebody who was probably upset and maybe even shaken by the fact that she was-- you know, not accused of murder but accused of playing a material role in this incident in a very, very direct way, when in fact, the facts and the circumstances show that this had nothing to do with the left or the right. It had nothing to do with any map that Sarah Palin had or-- this was clearly, and I've dealt with enough murder cases and I've dealt with insanity defenses enough to know that this is one of those that comes out of the strange, weird, bizarre background of this-- of this-- of this young man. So yeah, she used the wrong word in-- in responding to it. But I can see why she would feel very upset--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Our time is limited--

RUDY GIULIANI: --or may be feel like--

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you quickly. Are you rethinking, are you thinking about maybe running for President again?

RUDY GIULIANI: Well, not this morning.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Why?

RUDY GIULIANI: I have thought about it in recent weeks but I haven't thought about it. And-- and my heart goes out to the congresswoman and her family and all of the people that lost loved ones and the people of Arizona and particularly the Green family. What a wonderful young girl and what an irony she was born on a terrible day for our country--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

RUDY GIULIANI: --and she died on a terrible day for our country.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, thank you so much, Mister Mayor for joining us this morning.

RUDY GIULIANI (overlapping): Thank you, Bob. Good job as usual.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I want to go now to Governor Rendell in Philadelphia. Well, Governor, you heard Rudy Giuliani. He said we need to establish a more civil discourse and then perhaps we can talk about these hot button topics like guns.

GOVERNOR EDWARD RENDELL (D-Pennsylvania): Well, I think that's right. I-- I think the Congress should rededicate itself to not only civil discourse but to working together and getting things done. There are areas where we can really meet the country's challenges if we put aside electioneering and partisanship like deficit reduction, like education--No Child Left Behind, like energy. We need an American energy initiative. Those are the things we can get going. And we ought to have a-- a logical discussion about the two points that the mayor raised. One, how to get an early detection system where we can get people help, but also get them classified as having mental problems so that they are no longer eligible under the Brady Bill to buy firearms. Had this man been classified, had he been committed civilly at any time prior to his purchasing

the gun from a-- a Walmart, he would have in fact been denied access to that firearm. But then, Bob, I also think we need a rational discussion on guns where we put aside the pressure from interest groups. And we take a look and say does any citizen protecting themselves or their home or using a handgun to hunt, do they need a clip that has thirty-three bullets in it? And, the answer is, of course, not. The Congress, it-- I think the nation's spirits would be lifted if the Congress acted quickly with the President and reinstated the assault weapons ban, which also had the ban on these large magazines, these clips that carried thirty-plus bullets.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you agree with Mister Giuliani in that the President's speech may have actually changed the debate and the discourse?

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: We will see. I-- I hope so. I thought the president sounded all the right themes. I think it was a great speech. And I-- And I think he put a lot of care into it and didn't make it political. But we'll see. And really the first test is on health care. Can the debate on health care where the Republicans have promised to repeal the bill even though they know that that's a false promise to the people because they said, it's not going to pass, and the President would veto it. Can the Republicans have discourse on that--allow amendments, allow discussion and maybe come up with three or four changes rather than a repeal which never can happen and bring those three or four changes to the President and say, "Mister President, will you work with us and try to modify this?" That, to me, is the important thing, not that-- and everybody sits together during the State of the Union. That would be a great symbol for the country, but that's not long lasting. We need to spend this year addressing the nation's problems, whether it's health care, whether it's education, whether it's energy, whether it's deficit reduction, whether it's gun control. We need to discuss those problems in a rational atmosphere where we don't demonize each other and where we listen, where we listen.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Governor, this is sort of your valedictory as governor on Sunday television.

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You leave office on Tuesday. How has the country changed since you came to office and are you-- how do you feel about the state of the nation right now?

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: Well, I-- I think first of all, in my eight years I've seen the level of partisanship and ideological posturing just increase and increase and increase. And I think it's tearing the fabric of our government apart. And if these lives were lost for a reason, the reason is if we can take something good out of it, this is a wake-up call to all of us, that we can't go on the way we're doing. We just simply can't do that. And if that happens, this tragic day will have done some-- some real good. Secondly, I have found that the recession has really hardened people's attitudes. And what's important going forward, if I were to give a message to the American people is, you've got to be able to discern the difference between very important government spending, investment in our physical infrastructure or intellectual structure, and wasteful government spending. The latter should be eliminated as quickly as possible. And that money should be saved to reduce the deficit. But we can't stop investing in our growth.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

GOVERNOR ED RENDELL: No business that's successful does that, neither should we.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Governor, thank you so much for being with us on this Sunday. We're going to be back in a minute and talk to her close associates and friends in the Congress, the friends and associates of Gabrielle Giffords, in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And we're back now with Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman-- Republican Congressman Jeff Flake, joins us from Phoenix this morning. Congressman Flake, let me start with you. Congress comes back. The debate on repealing health care overhaul is going to begin this week. Do you plan to change anything that you-- it will-- your tone change and do you think the Congress' tone is going to change when this debate unfolds?

REPRESENTATIVE JEFF FLAKE (R-Arizona): Well, I think it will. I think you'll see a more civil debate than you would have had otherwise. I'm-- I'm not sure the substance of the debate will change that much. And I think Republicans are committed to-- to repealing the law in the House. Obviously, but I-- I do think that the-- that the tone will change and that's a good thing. I-- I think it was a good decision to put it off for a week.

BOB SCHIEFFER: You know this is a small thing, but something I noticed in the accounts of what the new Speaker Boehner said yesterday. He talked about legislation. He called it job-- we're going to try to stop this job-destroying legislation instead of calling it job killing legislation. Do you think that is going to-- can that possibly continue on here or am I just being kind of a Pollyanna about this.

REPRESENTATIVE JEFF FLAKE: Well, I-- I think that we Republicans and I-- I think Democrats alike will realize that if we tone down the rhetoric sometimes our-- our debate is more effective from our own side. If you take a cue from the-- the movie industry, you look at the top grossing movies. They're-- they're almost always PG or PG-13. It's-- it's-- it's-- it's-- it's better to have a more civil tone and a civil debate. And-- and, I-- I think it-- it behooves all of us to do so.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator Gillibrand, you're one of those who are-- have gotten behind this idea that when the President makes his State of the Union address, that instead of all the Republicans sitting on one side of the chamber and all the Democrats on the other, that people just sit together, that's obviously a very cosmetic thing.

SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND: Mm-Hm.

BOB SCHIEFFER: But number one, tell me how is that going? And number two, do you think it really is a significant thing or could be?

SENATOR KIRSTEN GILLIBRAND: Well, I think it's a symbol, and a symbol is a very good place to start. And so, if we can actually come into that chamber and instead of me going to the left I go to the right and the Republicans do the opposite. What you're going to create is an image of the Congress deciding that we're going to work as a body, not as two separate sides. And that's a very good place to start. And I think the conversation you're having about health care is very meaningful, because one thing the governor brought up that I thought was very significant is that if we can move that conversation to what about the bill do you want to change. That is a legitimate debate that we should frankly have. The bill is not perfect it never has been. For example, after the bill was written a lot of our small businesses came to me and said there's

a lot of paperwork I now have to fill out. There's too many paperwork, every time I send "x" number dollars, I have to fill out a-- a form. We can change that. That's something we can absolutely agree on, but talking about repealing the whole piece of legislation, well, let's break it apart. Are the tax cuts for small businesses not something we can all agree on? I think it is. Are making medicines less expensive for seniors by closing the donut hole that's something we all agree on. Making sure we have more choices and more competition that's an American value, that's something we agree on. Making sure everyone covers preventive care, we can probably keep that. So having a debate about substance in recognition that the divisiveness of national politics has become so undermining of our ability to be successful is very important. And I think the President's call to action is extremely meaningful for that reason because all he's saying is that our democracy has to live up to the expect-- expectation of our children. That we have to solve the problems of the day and a very significant issue that we have to get to is the economy. We have to focus on how we're creating jobs.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Let me go to Congresswoman Wasserman Shultz quickly. You know, I-- I say this, not so much to be critical but you are very outspoken. You come to a point when you are in a debate, congresswoman. Do you plan to dial back your rhetoric when the Congress convenes this time?

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: Well, I-- I don't plan to debate my values and the principles of my constituents any less vigorously. But I think it starts with us and we have to lead by example and so I think all of us need to be more careful about the words that we choose to use, including the things like the title of the-- of the re-- repeal of the health care reform. I-- I'm glad that that Speaker Boehner chose to verbalize a-- a-- a different-- a different title for that bill but they so far have refused to actually change the title of job-killing health care repeal. So I-- I think we need to be leaders by example and when we do that, then hopefully we're going to be able to push the shock jocks and others outside our process to take a page from our book. And if we have a more productive civil discourse then we can really live-- live up to President Obama's words and Christina Taylor Gr--Green's dreams of-- of her expectations for our democracy.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right.

REPRESENTATIVE DEBBIE WASSERMAN SCHULTZ: We've got to lead by example.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let me go to Congressman Flake quickly because we're running out of time. Congressman, what is going to be the hardest part of all this?

REPRESENTATIVE JEFF FLAKE: Well, I-- I think keeping this tone that seems to be now set into the future. It-- it's easy to slip back into-- into old ways and like I've said I think we can have the debates we need to with a more civil tone. And frankly, I think we'll find that that's more effective from both sides but keeping that into the future is going to be a tough thing.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. I want to thank all of you for being with us this morning. I'll be back with some final thoughts of my own in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, when I read that Thursday marks the fiftieth anniversary of John Kennedy's inaugural, I could not help but remember how Kennedy's message of hope and change had inspired so many that day and how those hopes were dashed in the confidence of

the nation was shaken when he died, such a few short years later. I was there. I remember. And I could not help but think of those days and the chain of violent events that followed as I reflected on the events of the last week. I thought about how weapons like the cheap mail order rifle that Lee Harvey Oswald bought to kill Kennedy and weapons even more powerful are still available over-the-counter to people like Jared Loughner. And it made me again wonder is there not some way that we can change that? Poll after poll and election after election has shown Americans want the right to own a gun and I believe in that right. But if we can find a way to bar minors from buying alcohol, if we can keep those with bad eyesight from driving, if the army could find a way to keep Loughner from joining, can we not find a way to keep the mentally deranged from buying weapons? If we do not, violence will become an ever larger part of our politics and our national life because it cannot be otherwise. Simply because technology is making the weapons even deadlier and the irrational will continue to do irrational things. We can never stop that completely. What we can do at the least is to make it harder for them. We also have a right to safety.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's our broadcast for today. We'll see you right here next week. Thanks for being here.

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