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



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Reporting from Tripoli

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TRANSCRIPT

BOB SCHIEFFER: Today on FACE THE NATION, here we go again. The government is on the verge of a shutdown because Congress can't agree on the budget.

(Crowd protesting)

BOB SCHIEFFER: While across the Middle East, anti-government demonstrators again turned out in protest.

We'll talk with the Senate Democratic Leader Harry Reid and Senator Lindsey Graham, a key Republican, in both the budget negotiations and defense policy.

It's all next 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. The democratic leader in the Senate Harry Reid is with us in the studio this morning. But before we get to him, the news from overnight.

In Afghanistan, U.S. Commander David Petraeus condemned the burning of the Koran by Florida preacher, which has set off three days of riots in Afghanistan and taken more than twenty lives.

In Libya, NATO warplanes continue to target Moammar Qaddafi's forces, Qaddafi shows no signs of leaving, but one air strike went wrong and took the lives of thirteen rebels.

In Yemen, some of the biggest demonstrations yet, hundreds of thousands turned out to demonstrate against the government which has been an important ally of the United States in the war against terror.

And in Syria, Bashar Assad is trying to form a new government in an effort to end another wave of protests that took at least seven lives there.

To get more on all this we go to CBS News correspondent Liz Palmer in Tripoli. So, Liz, first, what are you hearing about Yemen and Syria?

ELIZABETH PALMER: Well, essentially, Bob. It's turned into a game of chicken between President Assad and the reform-minded demonstrators.

(Crowd protesting)

ELIZABETH PALMER: Today, he appointed a new prime minister but the demonstrators think that's just cosmetic. And they're hitting the streets again in the thousands. The catalyst is funerals for people who were killed by his security forces yesterday. And so it looks as if the confrontation if not the violence is going to continue.

(Crowd protesting)

ELIZABETH PALMER: In Yemen, the President is hanging on to power by his fingertips. We've got competing demonstrations--pro and anti-government there and a big dilemma for the United States, because although the President is seen as a despot, he's also an ally in the war against al Qaeda.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And, of course, where you are in Tripoli, it looks very peaceful right there where you are. But that's not the case throughout the country, I'm told.

ELIZABETH PALMER: Weirdly peaceful here in Tripoli. This is a city with traffic jams. Normally, it's like an early Sunday morning every single day. Out in the east, the fighting has sort of stalled at Brega. U.S. warplanes are coming out of the fight today. NATO will continue with the air strikes. And it remains to be seen whether a slightly better organized rebel force can actually shove Qaddafi's troops out of this key oil port of Brega. We should know in another couple of days.

BOB SCHIEFFER: And Qaddafi, do we have any idea where he is?

ELIZABETH PALMER: None whatsoever. He's been conspicuously absent even from Libyan television. One of his spokesmen said cryptically, oh, you know, he has offices all over the country implying that he may not be here in Tripoli. What everybody is wondering is whether the regime is crumbling from the inside and whether the defection of Moussa Koussa, the foreign minister is just the first of others to come. So far no word at all on that either.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Liz Palmer. Be careful, Liz. Thank you so much.

And, Senator Reid, I want to ask you first about the situation in Afghanistan. Our military commander there General Petraeus, was so disturbed by this and the reaction, the fallout in Afghanistan that he sent e-mails to all the Sunday morning shows telling them to please emphasize that he condemns this. And now you have Afghanistan President Karzai calling on Congress to condemn the burning and to prevent it, he says, from happening again. Do you have a response to this?

SENATOR HARRY REID (D-Nevada/Senate Majority Leader): Of course, this man in Florida who burnt the Koran, it's a publicity stunt. Basically, had nobody in his church anyway and this is an effort to get some publicity for him. He got it. But in the process ten to twenty people have been killed. You-- you-- you-- religious extremism in any form is wrong. And certainly all these deaths is wrong. I'm very, very disappointed that this man who we had some dealings with in January, December, who indicated he wouldn't do anything. And suddenly, I guess, the publicity had fallen down a little bit so he decided to do this. It's-- it's really too bad. And, I think people should understand the consequences of what they do un-- under the guise of reli-- religion.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, you introduced a resolution to condemn this by the Congress--

SENATOR HARRY REID (overlapping): Now we'll--

BOB SCHIEFFER: --or where do you go from here?

SENATOR HARRY REID: We'll-- we'll take a look at this, of course. John Kerry, the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, has been on top of this. He's made many trips to Afghanistan. And I think we'll take a look at this as to whether we need hearings or not, I don't know.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator Reid, you heard Liz Palmer in Tripoli. The war goes on. American warplanes have created a no-fly zone. We're heavily involved militarily. But as you heard her say, Qaddafi is still there. What do we do next here?

SENATOR HARRY REID: Well, the people of Libya are going to decide and I think fairly quickly whether that's days or weeks. But I think its days or weeks as to whether they're going to be ruled by a terrorist, a war criminal, Qaddafi, or whether they're going to have a so-- society that's civilized. And I think they've already cast their lot. They want a civilized society.

BOB SCHIEFFER: There's a dispute here in Washington about whether the rebels or whether we should now arm them. Should we?

SENATOR HARRY REID: I spoke to the President yesterday about this, President Obama. And I think at this stage, we really don't know who the leaders of this rebel group is. We have others as Secretary Gates has said, that can do it more easily than we can. So I think at this stage let's just wait and see.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Syria. This is the big problem. You saw again, there's this demonstration in Syria. Do you envision the United States becoming involved militarily there?

SENATOR HARRY REID: I don't see that. I do think that Syria has been really a difficult problem for us for some time. They're working with Hezbollah. They have been disturbing what's going on in Lebanon for a long period of time. They are in fact, a state of Iran. They get their orders from Iran. So this country is not really a country of its own. And I think the sooner there's some stability there, the better off we are. And now I hope reestablishing a new cabinet will help. But I don't see us getting involved there militarily.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Let's talk about what's happening here in Washington. Congress, Senator, has been in session since January. And unless you can find some way around it, the government will have to shutdown at the end of this week, because you can't agree on a budget. Can you avoid a government shutdown?

SENATOR HARRY REID: You know we throw numbers around here. And that's good. We need to do that. But this is more than numbers. This-- it's involves people. What they did to this H.R.1, this bill that did such mean-spirited things not in the-- not at-- not to cut the debt, but send an ideological message. For example, little kids, head start, these are the poor little children around the country. Little boys and girls who want to get a head start. That is, be able to when they go to school learn to read and write and do a little bit of math. The-- the cutting benefits to homeless veterans.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Yes.

SENATOR HARRY REID: These are the kinds of things that have received a lot of publicity. The point--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): But can you avoid the government shutting down?

SENATOR HARRY REID: The Republican leadership in the House has to make a decision whether they're going to do the right thing for the country or do the right thing for the Tea Party. The Tea Party, you see, they spent weeks organizing here. And they-- the day came for their demonstration a couple days ago. They didn't have thousands of people there. They didn't have

hundreds of people. They had tens of people. If you really stretch it, you might have had a hundred and fifty people there. The Tea Party is not looked at very strongly around the country. The only attention they get is in the House of Representatives. And they shouldn't be getting that attention.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, what I mean are you saying that Speaker Boehner and the Republicans who have been here a while are afraid of the Tea Party? Is that what's going on here?

SENATOR HARRY REID: Now that's a pretty good choice of words. The answer is yes. The Tea Party is dictating a lot that goes on in the Republican leadership in the House. And they shouldn't. It shouldn't be that way. We should-- we've-- we've agreed on a number. Let's work to get that number done. Its-- you know we realize that the country needs to do something about spending. And the long-term benefits to doing something about the deficit are significant. But we don't have to reinvent the wheel. We during the Clinton years reduced the debt for four years. We paid down the debt. We know how to do this. But we don't-- we don't do it on the backs of middle class Americans and kids.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): You-- you said you've agreed on a number. That is, a number of how much to cut from the current budget.

SENATOR HARRY REID: That's right.

BOB SCHIEFFER: That's what you're talking about.

SENATOR HARRY REID: Yes.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What is the number?

SENATOR HARRY REID: But-- but Bob, the other thing-- it's seventy-three billion. But also remember this. What the H.R.1 does, what the House is trying to do is send out a message, we're going to balance the budget. But they're doing it with about ten percent of the budget. You can't do that. And these are the domestic discretionary programs. Let's assume for purposes of our discussion here that we eliminate everything. That is, we get rid of all the courts, the Bureau of Land Management, the Forest Service, the Immigration and Naturalization, Congress, everything we get rid of it. Still wouldn't balance the budget. There are-- we need to look at the long-term impact that our spending habits have created. We-- we need to look at-- why-- why do we need to continue giving tax breaks to the oil companies?

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): But I-- I--

SENATOR HARRY REID: The former head of Shell Oil said he didn't think that was appropriate anymore. Agriculture are making more money than they've ever made. Let's take a look at some of those.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, do you think- let me go back to my original question.

SENATOR HARRY REID: Ah-Huh.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Do you think at the end of this week the government is going to be shut down or is it going to be operating?

SENATOR HARRY REID: I always look at the glass being half full. I think we can work this out. There's-- it's-- it's so easy to do. We're just a-- really in Washington terms a few dollars short of being able to do this. It's a question of how we do it. We can't do it on head start. We can't do it at-- there-- there's a program for little kids. We can't do it for a --on the homeless veterans. We can't do it on program that was developed by President Nixon. The legislation introduced by the first President Bush when he was in Congress. That's the Title 10. All those programs have not contributed to the debt. Let's work on programs that contribute to the debt.

BOB SCHIEFFER: What-- does the President need to become more involved? What would you like-- what would you like to happen here? What can make this happen? What-- what does Speaker Boehner have to do here?

SENATOR HARRY REID: President has been heavily involved. Every day that I'm working, we have with us the head of the Office of Management and Budget Jack Lew. We have Rob Neighbors who was a long-time appropriations chief clerk in the House. We work with the President on a daily basis. He gets a briefing every day. I talk to him. I talked to him yesterday. I talked to Biden. So they're heavily involved here. What my friend John Boehner needs to do is say what's the best thing for the country. And we all know the best thing for the country is to work something out on this. We-- we-- it's so easy to do. But we have to have a fair share of other programs, not just these programs that hurt middle class and the poor in America.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Mister Majority Leader, thank you so much for being with us this morning.

SENATOR HARRY REID: Sure.

BOB SCHIEFFER: When we come back, we're going to talk to Lindsey Graham who is a Republican. He may have some different ideas about this.

Be back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And now from the campus of Clemson University in South Carolina, Senator Lindsey Graham. Senator Graham, I want to start with this, what Senator Reid just said. He-- he suggested, I asked him, I said, are Speaker Boehner and the mainstream Republicans, the people that have been around here a while just afraid of the Tea Party. And he said, well, that's a pretty good choice of words. Are you afraid of the Tea Party?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM (R-South Carolina/Armed Services Committee/Budget Committee): No, I think they're an important part of the Republican coalition. But Democratic friends should be afraid of the public. How did you lose the House in such overwhelming numbers? How did you lose so many Senate seats? It was about spending, the size and scope of government, rejection of Obamacare. So our friends in the House, Speaker Boehner who replaced Speaker Pelosi is doing what the American people want in the last election trying to reduce the size and scope of the government, which is a goal shared by the Tea Party. But you can't account for the last election based on a narrow view of America. Americans as a whole are very upset about the size and scope of the federal government. We're trying to reduce spending and our Democratic friends are hanging on to old ideas that every time you try to reduce spending you're being cruel and mean. What's cruel and mean is to pass this debt on--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): All right.

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: --to our future generations.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator, let me ask you the same question I asked sen-- Senator Reid, because I know you're heavily involved in some of these negotiations. Do you think next Sunday, we're going to talk about the government being shutdown or will you have found some sort of a way to get together?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: I think we'll get together. I think there are enough Red State Democrats, who do not want to take this fight any further. They do want to be seen as reducing spending. We're talking about twelve percent of the budget. Harry is right about that. The 2012 budget on the Republican side will be talking about reducing the size of government by trillions not just billions. But I think we'll find consensus. We've already reduced spending by ten billion dollars. The two CRs that we passed cut spending more than any Congress in the history of America in terms of rescission. So I think we'll find common ground there, enough Democrats out there who understand they need to be on the right side of reducing the federal government and we'll find a number that we can all agree on.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I want to get to this Afghanistan thing. General Petraeus today condemned the actions of this Florida preacher, who-- who burned the Koran. You heard what Senator Reid said.

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Is there anything that actually can be done along this line?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: You know I wish we could find some way to-- to-- to hold people accountable. Free speech is a great idea but we're in a war. During World War II, you had limits on what you could say if it would inspire the enemy. So burning a Koran is a terrible thing. But it doesn't justify killing someone. Burning a bible would be a terrible thing but it doesn't justify murder. But having said that, any time we can push back here in America against actions like this that put our troops at risk we ought to do it. So I look forward to working with Senator Kerry and Reid and others to condemn this, condemn violence all over the world based in the name of religion. But General Petraeus understands better than anybody else in America what happens when something like this is done in our country. And he was right to condemn it. And I think Congress would be right to reinforce what General Petraeus said.

BOB SCHIEFFER: We saw the report from Liz Palmer, a turmoil all across the Middle East--

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --this morning. Is it time to arm the rebels in Libya and go directly after Qaddafi?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, I think it's time to go directly after Qaddafi. If you had TOW missiles given to the rebels in Libya, they could fight the tanks in addition to air power but this strategy that President Obama has come up with, I think, is not going to defeat a determined enemy. The question is, is Qaddafi determined? The strategy is confusing to the American people. Only twenty-one percent believe President Obama has a clear view of how to

handle Libya. It's demoralizing to our allies, particularly people on the ground that we're trying to help. And I think it's encouraging to our enemies. So this strategy is going to lead to a stalemate. And we should be taking the fight to Tripoli. You don't need ground troops but we should take the aerial campaign to Tripoli to go after Qaddafi's inner circle. They live like kings, go after them, do go after their propaganda machine. The way to end this war is to have Qaddafi's inner circle to crack. The way to get his inner circle to crack is to go after them directly.

BOB SCHIEFFER: So you're calling-- you say what we need to do is air strikes on-- on Qaddafi and his people?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Absolutely. I think he's an international war criminal. I don't believe he's a legitimate leader of the Libyan people. His inner circle is in a bit of disarray. They would be in more disarray if we take the fight to Tripoli. We're going to have a stalemate if we don't change our strategy. The strategy should be to help the rebels help themselves, provide arms when it makes sense, to take the best air force in the world and park it during this fight is outrageous. When we call for a no-fly zone, we didn't mean our planes. So tomorrow, the American Air Force is out of this fight and as much as I respect our na-- NATO allies, you take a lot of capacity off the table by grounding our airplanes. And that's going to make this war go longer. I want it to end quickly with one goal in mind, replacing Qaddafi by something that will be better. And I'm confident that what you see in the Arab world, Bob, is a good thing if we manage it well. These people throughout the Arab world are saying, enough to tyranny, enough to despots, we want a better future, a future that we can recognize and associate ourselves with.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Senator, you know, when a story like this happens and we got two big stories now, the-- the situation in Japan and the situation in Libya, it tends to just sort of overwhelm the rest of the news. And a lot of things--

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --that would be getting coverage, don't get coverage. One of those is-- is Iraq. I'm told that you're concerned about what's happening in-- in Iraq right now. Why so?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, I'm deeply concerned. We're inside the ten-yard line in terms of finishing the job in Iraq. But in 2011, all troops are supposed to leave Iraq, American troops. I do not believe the State Department can carry on their mission of helping the Iraqi government and people, reconstitute their society to help them build a civil society without American forces there to provide security, air-- air power, logistical support the Iraqi army. This idea of being pushed that we'll have State Department army, I will not vote for that. I will not support that. We need American troops in 2012, ten to fifteen thousand, left behind in Iraq to provide to security to our people who are helping the Iraqi people maintain air superiority to have an edge against Iran. And to make sure that the Iraqi army--

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): What--

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: You-- you say a State Department army. What are-- you're going to have to explain that. What are you talking about?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well--

BOB SCHIEFFER: What are they planning here?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Well, here's the back-up plan. If all military forces have withdrawn from Iraq in 2011, the State Department has come to the Congress and said we're going to need over fifty MRAPs, mine resistant vehicles. We need a fleet of helicopters and thousands of private security guards to protect us as we go to the four consulates in Iraq to do our job to help the Iraqis build a civil society out of a dictatorship. I think that is a losing formula. I do not believe the State Department should have an army, that that's not the way to provide security to our State Department. That if we're not smart enough to work with the Iraqis to have ten to fifteen thousand American troops in Iraq in 2012, Iraq could go to hell.

BOB SCHIEFFER (overlapping): Are-- are you--

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: There are fights now between Kurds and the Arabs.

BOB SCHIEFFER: I-- I -- I'm sorry. But I find this a-- a hard to believe. Are you talking about we're going to arm our diplomats and put them in these kinds of vehicles that people are driving around in Iraq now?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Yeah. You-- you-- you've got it, Bob. That we're going to have private security guards providing security. I think American soldiers and the Iraqi army should provide security. We're talking about helicopters, a fleet of helicopters so they can get around to the four consulates, spread throughout Iraq. We're talking about MRAPs, mine resistant vehicles bought by the State Department, a mini State Department army. We've never done that before. That will fail. I'm urging the Obama administration to work with the Maliki administration in Iraq, to make sure that we have enough troops ten to fifteen thousand beginning in 2012, to secure the gains we've achieved to make sure Iran doesn't interfere with the Iraqi sovereignty and-- and to develop this country. We can't do it with a State Department army and I will not support that. This is a defining moment in the future of Iraq. And the Obama administration has the wrong strategy in liby-- Libya and in my view they're-- they're going down the wrong road when it comes to Iraq.

BOB SCHIEFFER: Well, I find all of it hard to believe. We have about twenty seconds, senator. I want to go back to make sure I understand what you said about-- about Libya. You're ready to give missiles to the rebels there?

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: I think TOW missiles-- I'm ready to look at arming them to help themselves. We need American air power back into the fight and we need to take the fight to Tripoli. Go after his inner circle. That's the way to end this war decisively and quickly. The strategy we have is going to lead to a stalemate. It needs to change. Help the rebels, take the fight to Tripoli. Get this thing over with. Qaddafi must go. It would be a disaster to keep him in power.

BOB SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, you certainly made some news this morning, senator. I'll give you that. Thank you so much--

SENATOR LINDSEY GRAHAM: Thank you.

BOB SCHIEFFER: --for being with us. And I'll be back with a final word in just a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: Finally today, after all these years and a long dispute, Richard Nixon's friends and the National Archives have reached an agreement that will allow the Nixon Presidential Library to mount an exhibit that tells the real story of Watergate. That's good. It will give the library much more credibility and that the dispute went on so long is not all that out of the ordinary in historical terms. As long as there has been history, humans have tried to rewrite it. The Pharaohs often defaced the statues of their predecessors as they sought literally to erase them from history. Whoever happened to be in power in the old Soviet Union tried to rewrite that country's history to cast themselves in a better light. But for all the effort, it has never worked. The truth always outs. The best public relations, the heaviest spin, can never trump bad policy. And bad PR can never trump good policy. The Nixon presidency is a prime example.

Nixon's disregard of the law and the Constitution was disgraceful. That is part of his legacy and his apologists cannot change that. Yet, Nixon was far ahead of his party in American public opinion when he made his courageous opening to China and his arms control agreements with the Soviets. Those were monumental achievements and will be remembered as such whatever his critics say. So I'm glad the Nixon Library did what it did. Truth, telling it straight, is still the best way.

Back in a minute.

(ANNOUNCEMENTS)

BOB SCHIEFFER: And that's it for us. We'll be right here next week on FACE THE NATION.

ANNOUNCER: This broadcast was produced by CBS News, which is solely responsible for the selection of today's guests and topics. It originated in Washington, DC.