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

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FACE THE NATION

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GUESTS: Senator **CHUCK HAGEL (R-NE)**
Senate Foreign Relations Committee

Senator **JACK REED (D-RI)**
Senate Armed Services Committee

MODERATOR/PANELIST: Mr. Bob Schieffer – CBS News

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BOB SCHIEFFER, host:

Today on FACE THE NATION: Obama got the spotlight, but what about those other senators who were on the trip? What's their assessment of the state of the war?

Senator Obama is back in Chicago after a whirlwind tour of Afghanistan, Iraq and the capitals of Europe, and he is convinced we have to shift the war on terrorism from Iraq to Afghanistan. But how do Republican Senator Chuck Hagel and Democratic Senator Jack Reed see it? They were with him in the war zones. Do they believe we can drawdown our forces in Iraq? And what about the political impact of this trip? We'll talk about it.

Then I'll have a final word on that other war on cancer. Are we serious about it, or are we looking for a political settlement there, too?

But first, Hagel and Reed 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. Joining us, Senator Chuck Hagel of Nebraska, Senator Jack Reed of Rhode Island; two senators who, I would guess if we added up the amount--the number of trips that the two of you have made, it would probably be about twice what other members of Congress have compiled.

You've been there, what, 12 times, Senator Reed?

Senator JACK REED (Democrat, Rhode Island; Armed Services Committee): Twelve times, Bob.

SCHIEFFER: And how about you, Senator Hagel?

Senator CHUCK HAGEL (Republican, Nebraska; Foreign Relations Committee): Six times.

SCHIEFFER: Six times. So you were both there. The spotlight, of course, was on Barack Obama, but you were in all the briefings in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Let me start out with you, Senator Hagel. Do you agree with Barack Obama's assessment on Afghanistan and on Iraq now, where he's saying we've got to shift the focus to Afghanistan?

Sen. HAGEL: Well, I think the--clearly, and I have believed this for some time--that the central front on our war against terrorism and all the dynamics that are in play there is in fact that border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. We have seen the resurgence of the Taliban in that area, of al-Qaeda, other terrorist groups. We are stretched too thin in Afghanistan, in my opinion, with manpower. We are going to have to put some additional troops in there. That is not alone going to solve that problem. I believe that Barack Obama's general assessment is correct.

But one additional point. This is going to require at least a new trilateral policy, strategic policy context with the governments of Afghanistan, Pakistan, the United States, as well as including

Iran and India into this. And if we don't do that, we're going to be faced with years and years of this problem with significant global consequences. We still have interests in Iraq, of course we do. How we unwind that in the time frame, I think, is obviously going to get played out. But I think overall, at least in my opinion, Barack Obama's assessment of it is correct.

SCHIEFFER: Precarious and urgent, that's how he described the situation in Afghanistan.

Senator Reed, you, of course, had been for beginning a drawdown of troops in Iraq for some time. What's your sense of it now after making this last trip?

Sen. REED: I think we have to do it. We have to provide more flexibility to provide forces for Afghanistan, as Admiral Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, indicated. We have to put more forces on the ground. Those forces will likely come from Iraq. We also have to begin to transition so that the Iraqis can stand up and assume more of the burden. There's been a tremendous burden on American forces and also on the American taxpayer. And also, we're seeing on the ground in Iraq the government of Iraq saying 'We want to have a time horizon,' timeline, deadline, whatever you call it. So their view is converging with the view that I've held--held and Senator Obama has held for many, many months now that we have to begin a redeployment, careful redeployment, we have to focus on missions of counterterrorism, force protection and training Iraqis security forces. But if we don't provide more forces in Afghanistan, we're going to see a very, very serious situation get worse. That's where al-Qaeda is, in the tribal areas of Pakistan. Our intelligence officials have told us they're reinvigorated, reconstituting themselves. And we've learned, to our dismay, if we give them operational space, they can cause harm. We don't want to see that.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I mean, are we in danger of losing in Afghanistan? I mean, how close to--I mean, how bad is this?

Sen. REED: We're seeing an uptick in violence, a significant increase in violence. We're also seeing--and it's hard to, you know, draw definitive conclusions, but we saw a very coordinated attack against American forces involving 200-plus soldiers--not soldiers, but Taliban forces who attacked and tragically killed several of our soldiers. And that's--that is an indication that they are rearming, training, they've got better fighters. That's a very discouraging and very, I think, significant sign. General McKiernan, on the ground, told us point-blank he needs more forces. We've got to get those forces to our troops in the field.

Sen. HAGEL: Well, I think in addition to what Jack has said--and I agree with his comments--we have got to focus more directly with the Afghan government, as well as the other governments in that area, on counterinsurgency efforts, coordinating those with counternarcotics efforts as well as corruption. Building institutions to govern Afghanistan is one of the most specific objectives that we have. That doesn't occur overnight. But that has to come with some strategic context, not just base on security. That helps. That helps us get there, but this is a fighter scope of what has to happen there. And it's difficult, it's time-consuming, and that's why I have said for a number of years--and I've been to Afghanistan, I think, four times. Doesn't mean I'm an expert. And Pakistan as well. That those countries have to be included in this, because we will never be able to put enough troops in there to stop that, and we've got to get to the root here. Counternarcotics, counterinsurgency all framed in integrated strategies, as well as the neighbors and building institutions to govern.

SCHIEFFER: Let me go back to Iraq. Senator Reed, has the surge worked? Putting more troops into Iraq, did that work?

Sen. REED: There's been a demonstrable reduction in violence, and one of the facts is a contributor of that was the increase of our forces. But also contributing to that was the Sunni awakening, which preceded our force increase. The tribal leaders, the sheiks in Anbar province decided they'd had enough of al-Qaeda. Also contributing to that was a cease-fire initiated by Sadr and his JAM, his Mahdi army. Those factors have, I think, contributed to a lessening of violence. That is a good thing.

SCHIEFFER: Why is it that Barack Obama can't say just what you've said. He seems to say, well, he didn't think the surge was a good idea, he didn't particularly think it was effective, but he says things are better. Why doesn't he come out with a clearer answer on that, as a Democrat?

Sen. REED: Well, I don't--I don't think his answer is much different than mine. He recognizes these political factors. I think he also recognizes that recently, particularly, the prime minister, Maliki, has taken some very decisive action on his own. The operations in Basra were initiated by the prime minister. So we're seeing some traction politically as well as militarily, and I think that's something that he's recognized. But one of the issues I think that's significant to note about the surge, it's a tactical and operational innovation that's been productive, very productive.

SCHIEFFER: What do you--what do you think?

Sen. REED: But it's not tied to a strategy. And he is insisting upon a strategic view that has to be linked to going forward, not looking back. It has to be linked to redeploying our forces out, concentrating on Afghanistan and I think going after the real threats to the United States, those al-Qaeda elements in the tribal areas.

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you this, Senator Hagel. You're a Republican. For a long time you were very, very close to John McCain. I want to ask you later...

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: ...are you still that close? But he has been very, very hard on Senator Obama all this week and, I mean, the gloves have really come off. This morning...

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: ...in an interview on ABC he said, I think it was seven times, that Senator Obama simply doesn't understand the stakes in Iraq, he doesn't understand the situation there. And earlier in the week--we'll look at some tape here--here is how he put it at one point.

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

Senator JOHN McCAIN: Senator Obama would rather lose a war in order to win a campaign.

SCHIEFFER: He said this morning that Senator Obama's strategy was based, basically, on political expediency; that he chose--and these are Senator McCain's words--"a political path that would get him the nomination."

Sen. HAGEL: Well, let me begin by making this comment and answering your question. Both of these men are smart, capable, decent men who love their country. I think we as a nation are far better off for these two capable men. One will have to govern this country and bring the country together, as well as lead the world and bring the world together, and that's going to take a bipartisan consensus to govern. They're better off to focus on policy differences.

I think John is treading on some very thin ground here when he impugns motives and when we start to get into, 'You're less patriotic than me. I'm more patriotic.' I admire, respect John McCain very much, I have a good relationship--to this day we do, we talk often. I talked to him right before I went to Iraq, matter of fact. John's better than that. And he's not asked for my advice on this, but since you've asked me the question, I think both he and Barack have got--have to be very careful here, because it's just not responsible to be saying things like that; again, if for no other reason, for the good of this country and the world. One of these two men, on January 20th of next year, is going to have to bring this country together, and the world, to deal with huge problems. I think the next president is going to inherit an inventory of challenges as big as Franklin Roosevelt inherited on March 4th, 1933.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let me--just in line with what you said, the McCain campaign came out with a new ad, because Senator Obama chose not to visit those troops in the hospital...

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: ...in Germany. Let's take a look at this.

(Excerpt from John McCain political ad)

SCHIEFFER: Senator Reed, now, you've done a lot of these trips. They call them CODELs, congressional delegations. Go--are you ever allowed to take cameras when you go in to visit to wounded troops? I thought that was sort of the general rule that everybody knew about.

Sen. REED: I don't think Senator Obama would have done that. Senator Hagel, Senator Obama and I visited the combat support hospital in Baghdad to thank those nurses, those doctors, to see patients that were there, to bring a bit of greetings from home and profound thanks. That should be in the ad that Senator McCain is running. I think Senator Obama made a very wise choice. If it's any suggestion that a visit to a military hospital would be political, he made the wise choice not to go. But when we were in Baghdad we made a point, at the end of a very exhausting day, to go in, see these magnificent young Americans and those doctors and nurses that give such tremendous care without a lot of fanfare, just to say thanks. He did it--the same thing. We went--we didn't stay in Kabul, we went to Jalalabad to see the soldiers of the 173rd. We stopped in Basra to see our soldiers down there. We went into Anbar province to see soldiers there. Now, that is a completely distorted and I think inappropriate advertisement.

Sen. HAGEL: Let me add to the--to that. As you know, Bob, the congressional delegation that you refer to ended when we parted in Jordan. At that point, it was a political trip for Senator Obama. I think it would have been inappropriate for him--and certainly he would have been criticized by the McCain people and the press, and probably should have been--if on a political trip in Europe paid for by political funds, not the taxpayers, to go essentially, then, and be accused of using our wounded men and women as props for his campaign. I think the judgment there--and I don't know the facts, by the way, I know what I've just read, and no one's asked me about it other than what you just asked about. But I think it's--it would be totally inappropriate for him, on a campaign trip, to go to a military hospital and use those soldiers as props. And I--so I think he probably, based on what I know, he did--he did the right thing. We saw troops everywhere we went on the congressional delegation. We went out of our way to see those troops. We wanted to see those troops. And that--that's part of our job, to see those troops, by the way, and listen to those troops, Bob. And we did.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think that ad was appropriate?

Sen. HAGEL: I do not think it was appropriate.

SCHIEFFER: You do not.

Sen. HAGEL: I do not.

SCHIEFFER: All right, we're going to continue this conversation in just one minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: We're back again with Senators Chuck Hagel and Jack Reed.

And you know, Senator Hagel, you were talking about the next president's going to have to lead in a bipartisan fashion. You are well aware that some people are saying that maybe one way to do that would be if Senator Obama, a Democrat, asked you to be his running mate. Now, let me just ask you flat out, has anybody talked to you about that? Have you been asked to furnish any kind of information, or are you interested in anything of that nature?

Sen. HAGEL: No, no one has talked to me about it. I fully expect that Barack Obama will chose someone in his own party who would be very capable.

SCHIEFFER: Would you be interested?

Sen. HAGEL: Well, I don't expect any of that. I'm not interested in it. Obviously, Bob, someone who cares about their country. I've put a lot of years in for this country and I'm very proud of my service to this country, as Jack Reed is, as many people are.

SCHIEFFER: You're both military veterans. You were a veteran of Vietnam, of course.

Sen. HAGEL: And 12 years in the Senate, heading up the USO, working for the Reagan administration, George Bush's dad. I've done a lot of things. I'm proud of that. Anyone who cares about their country at a time of crisis--and I think this country's in a state of crisis, I think the

world is--if you're asked to consider something, of course you've got to do that. I fully expect, though, to be a private citizen next year and go get a real job.

SCHIEFFER: The other part of that is other people are mentioning you, Senator Reed, because of your military background. You're a West Point graduate, you've been on the Armed Services Committee for a long time now. A lot of people are saying that might balance out what some people see as Barack Obama's inexperience in those areas. Are you interested?

Sen. REED: I think I can best serve the nation, my state of Rhode Island and I hope President Obama by being a member of the United States Senate. And I hope the people of Rhode Island return me to the United States Senate. Again, I've thought about this and I am very committed, very dedicated to pursuing a career in the United States Senate. I..

SCHIEFFER: Let's just talk about the politics of this. I said at the top here, it looks like things are going to get pretty dirty from here on in. There have been some really harsh stuff going back and forth. Do you like the turn that this campaign has taken?

Sen. REED: No, I don't. I mean, I think the ads that you just showed on the TV are not worthy of the kind of campaign that should be waged and, frankly, are surprising given the caliber of Senator McCain and the caliber of Senator Obama. And I think this--we have huge problems, and Chuck talked about these issues confronting the president: our economy that's in distress, housing crisis, energy problems. There's enough to talk about without, I think, baseless insinuations about patriotism, baseless insinuations about one's respect for American troops. There's much more to talk about. And as Chuck suggested, too, the next president is going to have to lead the nation, not just their electorate. They're going to have to lead the nation. I think Senator Obama understands that. I was particularly impressed with not only what he said, but the tone of his remarks throughout our trip to the Middle East. And I think he also understands that this is about building not only support within the United States, you know, the American people, but also indicating to the world that America's ready to lead positively based on principle, based on approaching problems not alone, but with the world community.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you, Senator Hagel, and just turn a corner a bit if I could here. One of the things that we didn't hear Senator Obama talk very much about is the situation with Iran.

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: I would just ask you, how serious is this? We keep hearing reports that Israel is running exercises in case they have to make a decision and take a preemptive strike on Iran's nuclear capabilities. How concerned are you about Iran, and what would you advise whoever the next president is going to be to do about that?

Sen. HAGEL: Well, Bob, I have for some time now talked about engaging Iran, and I have done that on the basis of not excusing their actions, not looking the other way or pretending that reality's not reality, but just the opposite. The fact is, things are worse off in the Middle East today than they were eight years ago, by any measurement. Iran continues to go almost unchecked with its activities with Hamas and Hezbollah. Obviously, we have some sense that they are making progress on development of nuclear capability. They're critical to any solution in Afghanistan. Their tentacles are wrapped around many things. Now, it seems to me if we're going

to be able to deal with the larger context of the Middle East, Central Asia and find some solutions, a new center of gravity, it's going to require engaging Iran. I compliment the administration on having the undersecretary of state in one of those meetings last week. This is tough work, not unlike what we've been able to do with North Korea, not unlike where we were able to get to with Libya. It's imperfect, I recognize that, but I think we have got to get into the middle of this in a way where we can start influencing behaviors and direction. And it's based on common interest. What does Iran get out of this? Same kind of thing it was about, and still is, in North Korea, Libya. And there's only one alternative we don't do that, Bob, and it's not a very pretty one. That's war. And so I have--I've been pretty clear on that, and that's the advice I'd give to the next president. Now, this is imperfect, but without starting with a strategic regional context of how we deal with them--and I think we've got some beginning here with our involvement in that first meeting last week. Long process. But without that, Bob, we will--we will end up seeing the whole Middle East blow up. The consequences of that are not good for the world.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you quickly. There's--I mean, hearing you talk about this, this is real criticism of a Republican administration.

Sen. HAGEL: Mm-hmm.

SCHIEFFER: You're a Republican. Have you decided who you're going to vote for? Are you going to vote Republican or Democratic in this--in this election?

Sen. HAGEL: I haven't--I haven't decided. I am going to make that decision and will, and will vote when the time comes. But quite honestly, Bob, I'm trying to fulfill the commitments I made to my constituents in Nebraska, work as hard as I can the last year I'm in the Senate, do what I can to help John McCain or to--or to help Barack Obama. As I said, I talked to John right before I went to Iraq. He said publicly he was pleased that I was going with Barack Obama. And John was--said some very positive things about that relationship. And that's where I'm focused. I'm not going to get into the politics of this. Where I think I can play the most significant role for my country, not my party--I actually put the country before the party--is to use whatever expertise I can to help the next president of the United States govern in this country.

SCHIEFFER: We have to stop there. Sorry, Senator Reed. I had another question for you, but just no time here. Thank you both for being here...

Sen. HAGEL: Thank you, Bob, very, very much.

Sen. REED: Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: ...for an illuminating discussion. Back in a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Today's final thought, and I begin with a disclosure. I am a cancer survivor and I've lived for a long time with another disease called ulcerative colitis, both of which I probably got because of a long ago heavy addiction to nicotine. So I'm delighted the House will vote this week on legislation that, for the first time, will give the Food and Drug Administration real power to regulate tobacco products. I hope it passes. For the record, John McCain and Barack Obama, who

don't agree on much, agree this needs to be done. So does the American Cancer Society, as well as the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and on and on. The administration--incredibly, in my opinion--opposes it for a reason that would make the Queen of Hearts from "Alice in Wonderland" proud. Their reason: that the FDA already has such a huge job monitoring food safety that it just doesn't have the resources to take on the additional job of regulating tobacco. If it did, the administration argues, regulating food and drugs might suffer. I couldn't be more serious, that really is their main reason. By that logic, we shouldn't have asked the military or our intelligence agencies to get involved in fighting terrorism after 9/11. For sure, they already had plenty to do before Osama bin Laden came along.

After the Queen of Hearts issued her weird orders, her husband, the king, had a way of undoing them when she wasn't looking. Well, maybe Congress can do the same and pass this by veto-proof margins, because every day 1,000 children in America are learning to smoke. And for 20 years now 400,000 Americans have died each year from tobacco-related diseases. That's no fairy tale, those are just the facts. We'll be back in a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: And that's our broadcast. Thanks for watching. We'll see you next week, right here on FACE THE NATION.

