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

CBS News

FACE THE NATION

Sunday, January 11, 2004

**GUESTS: Representative DICK GEPHARDT, (D-MO)
Democratic Presidential Candidate**

**DOYLE McMANUS
Los Angeles Times**

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, the state of play in Iowa from one of the front-runners there, Dick Gephardt. One week before the Iowa caucuses and the race is tightening. Can Missouri Congressman Dick Gephardt reprise his win in 1988? Can he stop Howard Dean and what issue will finally decide Iowa? Those are the questions for Dick Gephardt. Doyle McManus of the Los Angeles Times will join us. And here is a question for you: Who's been on FACE THE NATION more than any other person? We'll tell you in our FACE THE NATION Flashback. Then, I'll have a final word on reality television.

But, first, Dick Gephardt running hard in Iowa 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 in this FACE THE NATION's golden anniversary year, 50 years on television come November.

With us from Des Moines, Iowa, Congressman Dick Gephardt, and joining in the questioning this morning, our friend Doyle McManus of the Los Angeles Times.

Congressman Gephardt, welcome to the broadcast.

Conventional wisdom is that you may be the only thing now standing between Howard Dean and the Democratic nomination. Is that right?

Representative RICHARD GEPHARDT (Democrat, Missouri; Democratic Presidential Candidate): Well, I think we're in a dead heat here and I think I'm going to win here. And I further think that I can win in a lot of the other early states, and I believe I'm going to win this nomination, and I'm going to defeat George Bush. In fact, I think I have the best chance to defeat George Bush of all the candidates.

SCHIEFFER: If you lose out there, and I know you've said before, 'I'm not going to lose,' but if you lose, can anybody then stop Howard Dean if he wins Iowa? Can anybody stop him from getting the nomination?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Bob, I'm going to win here. I've got the right issues. People are listening to what I'm talking about. People here care about health care. The middle class is losing jobs. Manufacturing jobs are leaving Iowa and going to Mexico, going to China. And people are worried about public education. They know that we've got big unfunded mandates out there like Leave No Child Behind and special education. And agriculture is in difficulty out here and farmers want to know how we're going to protect the individual family farm. And on all of those issues, I have the best, boldest, most common-sense solutions that I could actually get done as president because of my experience and translating that experience into these good ideas.

SCHIEFFER: OK. Those are the issues, but I guess I'll go back to the question I asked which was: Can anybody stop Howard Dean if you lose in Iowa?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, Bob, I--I--the 'if' part of the question...

SCHIEFFER: I know what you just said, so would you...

Rep. GEPHARDT: ...is part of the problem.

SCHIEFFER: ...would you just prefer not to answer the question...

Rep. GEPHARDT: I--I just--I--well, no, I--I...

SCHIEFFER: ...'cause if you do, I'll go on to something else?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, I really believe that I'm going to win here, I'm going to...

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Rep. GEPHARDT: ...defeat Howard Dean and the other candidates.

SCHIEFFER: OK.

Rep. GEPHARDT: I'm going to go ahead...

SCHIEFFER: All right.

Rep. GEPHARDT: ...and win this nomination.

SCHIEFFER: You have said that. OK. Doyle.

Mr. DOYLE McMANUS (Los Angeles Times): Congressman, what makes you think you're going to win. You know, the Los Angeles Times poll that was released last week had Howard Dean at 30 and you at 23. That's close but it still puts you behind. What rabbit is going to come out of a hat to put you over the top?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, I think all the polls that I've seen indicate basically a dead heat between Howard Dean and me. And I think when voters really bear down on this, which they'll do in the next week, and look at who has the best ideas to help revive the middle class in this country, help get jobs back in America and bring health care to everybody and who has the best chance to beat George Bush in these Midwestern states which is where you've got to beat him. I--and--and they look at who has steady hands, experience, doesn't make mistaken statements every day that have to be clarified the next day. I think people are going to settle on me as the person that they want to be the nominee in this--in this race against George Bush.

Mr. McMANUS: Well, let me pick up on that last point, 'cause you've been hammering at it a little bit. Are you saying that Howard Dean doesn't have the temperament to be president of the United States?

Rep. GEPHARDT: I just think that he is making differing statements on lots of issues day by day. He's been all over the lot on Medicare and what--what he said about Medicare in the mid-'90s and what he would do about Medicare in the future. He said Medicare was the worst federal program ever. I just totally disagree with that. I don't see how we can beat George Bush if we have a nominee who has made some of the statements that he's made just about Medicare. He's been all over the lot on Iraq. He has been all over the lot on, you know, the role of the Iowa caucuses and what goes on out here. He said in the mid-'90s again that, you know, the Iowa caucuses are dominated by the extremists and by special interests, you know? And I asked the question the other day--I said, 'Who are the special interests that he sees out here dominating the caucuses?'

Mr. McMANUS: But, sir, your...

Rep. GEPHARDT: Is it the farmers?

Mr. McMANUS: ...your--your strategic point...

Rep. GEPHARDT: Is it the senior citizens?

Mr. McMANUS: Your--your--your point here, then, is th--is that in a general election, you worry that President Bush would carve him up.

Rep. GEPHARDT: I think if you can't present an experienced view, if you c--if you don't have steady hands, if you're not reliable in the world that we're in, of terrorism and all the domestic difficulties we have, I just don't think people are going to leave the horse they're on, which at least has four years of experience, even though he's done a terrible job in my view, for someone who does not have experience.

SCHIEFFER: So you're saying if Howard Dean gets the nomination, George Bush is going to win the election.

Rep. GEPHARDT: No, I don't say that. I want to beat George Bush. That's why I'm out here. And I've said many times I'll support anybody who gets this nomination as strongly as I can to defeat George Bush. But I'm going to win this nomination, and I have the best chance to beat George Bush because I can win in these Midwestern states. If you look at an electoral map, the way we're going to win this thing is--is a--a line that runs from Iowa and Missouri over to West Virginia. Those are the critical states you have to beat him in. And that's where I'm from. My issues resonate with voters in those states, and I've got the experience and the bold ideas that will appeal to those voters and get them to vote for me to defeat George Bush. And that's what we have to do.

SCHIEFFER: All right. You--you have suggested that--that Howard Dean is sort of out of the mainstream, I guess would be one way I would put it, of the Democratic Party. Yet here he has the--the endorsement of Bill Bradley, of Al Gore and now of Iowa's Senator Tom Harkin. That would be sort of what's left of the Democratic establishment these days, or a--a big part of it. How did he do that? Why did they endorse him?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, he's r--I--I don't know. You'd have to ask them. But I really believe that voters out here in Iowa are very independent. They d--they don't listen to much of anybody. We've got husbands and wives here who differ on who they're going to support. So people really make an independent judgment. These are very, very good people to make this judgment. I trust their values. I trust their judgment. And they're anything but extreme and they're anything but representing special interests. These are the best people in the world to really make a personal evaluation of all of us. And--and they want to know who will help them with health care and education and farming and all the other issues--trade and jobs--and they want to know who has the best chance to defeat George Bush.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Let me...

Rep. GEPHARDT: And they're just--they're going to make that judgment on their own, is what I'm saying.

SCHIEFFER: Let me just ask you this question, and I mean it in a serious way, because right now we're having a debate in this country about values, I think. In a sense, you're talking about the people of Iowa, that values are very important to them. The discussion we're having in this country now is about Pete Rose and whether he ought to be admitted to the

Baseball Hall of Fame. And I think that's a question. I think people would like to know. Do you think he ought to be admitted to the Baseball Hall of Fame?

Rep. GEPHARDT: I do not. I-I r--I think he was a great baseball player, and if these other things hadn't happened, he would obviously be in the Hall of Fame already. But when you did something that was clearly against some of the cardinal rules of baseball, and then denied that you did it for 13, 14 years, and then finally said the truth, and--as a way to get in the Hall of Fame, I-I just don't think that sends the right message to people in our country. It's unfortunate that this happened, but he knew when he did what he did that that was a cardinal rule of baseball. You cannot have players or managers betting on games, even the games that they're not participating in. And I think those rules mean something, and you got to enforce the rules.

SCHIEFFER: Doyle?

Mr. McMANUS: Congressman, I want to ask you about Iraq. I know you've been asked that plenty of--of times before, but a lot of the polls suggest that Democrats who feel strongly about the Iraq issue are--are, in many ways, the bedrock of--of Howard Dean's support, and that that is an issue that hasn't attracted a lot of Democrats to you. Now you have said that the reason you voted to support the president on Iraq was that you had gone to the CIA, you had gotten the briefings on weapons of mass destruction, and all of the experts said those weapons were there, and it was an imminent threat. Since the war, of course, the evidence has--has piled up that the--the threat was not that imminent, that Saddam Hussein may have had a program, he may have had plans on paper, but it--it--it wasn't there, and that, in effect, we had more time. If you had known then what you know now about weapons of mass destruction, would you have voted a different way?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, that, of course, is a hypothetical that--that didn't occur. Let--let me just s--go back through what I did to make this decision. I didn't listen to George Bush, obviously, alone. Or--or perhaps at all. I went to the CIA, and I asked all of those questions and got an emphatic affirmative answer that there was genuine concern and worry that he either had components or weapons or the ability to quickly make components that could wind up in the hands of terrorists. I did the same thing with former Clinton officials who were in the security part of the Clinton administration and got the same answer. On that basis I believed that our greatest priority, our greatest responsibility is to keep the people of this country safe. We cannot have another terrorist attack in the United States, especially with weapons of mass destruction. We have to do everything in our power--and I will always do that, regardless of politics, because that's my responsibility. And that's the way I voted.

Now we need now to know if the intelligence was right or wrong or, if it was wrong, how it was wrong, and how to fix it. And it's why I've argued so strongly for a--a blue-ribbon objective commission to go through all of this so that we can improve the effort for the future.

Finally, a great mistake this president's made, and I've said it from the beginning, and I said it to him at least four times in the year 2002, that if he was going to deal with Iraq, he had to get help, from NATO and the UN. He has not done that. He doesn't work well with others. He treated these countries with disdain. He--he--he pushed them in a corner and we did not get the help that we needed and I think it's a terrible mistake for our country and the world.

Mr. McMANUS: Have you concluded yet that the intelligence was wrong or do you think it still might have been right?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Certainly grave questions have been raised about it and there is no evidence yet of the existence of components or weapons of mass destruction. But you--you

have got to go through a--this--this is why an outside analysis is needed. We--if you lose credibility in an intelligence area like this in the world, then we're never going to be able to lead the world in all the things that we need to do together to fight against terrorism. This is a tough adversary. It's a multilayered, complex problem, and we need a president who can be credible with the rest of the world, who can work with other world leaders, and bring them together behind us and the UN and NATO and do all the things that we need to do, not only in the symptoms of terrorism but the root causes of terrorism. One of the things that I'm most concerned about is this president doesn't even talk to us about what we need to do to get to the root causes.

SCHIEFFER: Let me ask you about something. Tonight on "60 Minutes" Lesley Stahl has an interview with Paul O'Neill who, of course, was the secretary of the Treasury in the early part of this administration, and, frankly, he was fired. Now he is giving out information in a new book that's coming out in which he says that the president was actually planning to take action against Saddam Hussein before 9/11. I would just ask you in what context do you take those remarks? After all, this--this is someone who was fired and sort of unceremoniously fired but he really lands on the president with both feet in this interview. Do you take this seriously? Should we take some of these remarks seriously?

Rep. GEPHARDT: Well, I--I think he, obviously, spent a lot of time with the president, and his comments should be looked at. I--I haven't seen them and I don't know exactly whether or not he's--you know, what he has said and whether it's correct. But let me say this. I think some of the things he said are things that I found when--when I met with the president. I told the president on 9/12, the day after 9/11, that we had to trust one another, that we had to try to put politics aside, to try to prevent further acts of terrorism. I said this is a matter of life and death and we've got to do our best to work together to keep our people safe. And I really tried to do that.

I found him to be hard to help. I--I did not--I--I made a lot of suggestions to him, not that my suggestions were the be-all and end-all; many of them probably weren't. But I never got a response. He didn't--he didn't--he's--he's a--he's a nice man, and he's a smart man, but he doesn't have experience. He doesn't have knowledge, and he has no curiosity. We never carried on much of a discussion about the pros and cons of whatever suggestion was being made.

I suggested to him a number of times in 2002 that he needed to get to the UN, he needed to restart the inspections if we were going to get the UN behind us. I--I even said we set up the UN. It's--it's our organization. We have to do everything in our power to bring them in behind us. And--and I just--we didn't have a real robust discussion of that and he d--he just didn't seem to be interested in discussing the pros and cons and the ins and outs of things like this, and maybe that's what this gentleman...

SCHIEFFER: But...

Rep. GEPHARDT: ...Paul O'Neill, is talking about.

SCHIEFFER: Your--your phrase is 'The president is hard to help.' I--that's what I take as the gist of what you have just told me. Let me just ask you about one other thing, Congressman Gephardt. Apparently later this week the president is going to announce that there should be some sort of new space program to go back to the moon. Do you think we need to go back to the moon?

Rep. GEPHARDT: I think that before we make that decision, we've really got to decide what we're doing with the present space program, which is revolving around the space station. I

think we need to do a--a real analysis by our scientific community on what the best thing is to do. I don't think--I haven't looked at the numbers lately, but I don't know that we can go off on a new moon mission or Mars mission, if that's the suggestion, and--and just have the money to do something in addition to completing the space station. I think we're pretty far down the road on the space station and we need to complete it and have the success from it that we need. One of the good aspects of the space station is that we get to work with the Russians, and we give them an important role, and other countries in the world. I think that's very important. And maybe down the road we can look into--into other projects.

I think right now we need to be doing things to help the middle class of this country. That's our problem. We need to get health care for everybody. I've said many times we're not going to solve the jobs problem until we solve the health-care problem. We need an energy program that would be high-tech and full of science for renewable energy--wind, solar, hydrogen, ethanol.

SCHIEFFER: Right.

Rep. GEPHARDT: These are the things that we can produce here in the United States. That is exciting to people. I'm out here every day in Iowa...

SCHIEFFER: Right.

Rep. GEPHARDT: ...talking about an alternative energy program. People are excited about it.

SCHIEFFER: All right. We have to cut it off there. Thank you so much, Congressman. We'll see you next week when we'll be out there for the caucuses.

Back in a minute with our FACE THE NATION Flashback.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: So who has appeared on FACE THE NATION more than any other person? Well, the answer is Bob Dole who also knows a thing or two about Iowa and New Hampshire. He's the subject of our FACE THE NATION Flashback.

Unidentified Announcer: (From January 17, 1971) FACE THE NATION, a spontaneous and unrehearsed news interview with the new chairman of the Republican National...

SCHIEFFER: Dole first appeared on FACE THE NATION on January 17th, 1971, as Republican Party chairman then and later as senator, Senate leader, vice presidential and presidential candidate. He's appeared on the broadcast 62 times. He was part of the greatest generation. Wounded in World War II; he turned to politics when he came home to Kansas. After his long political career, who better to offer perspective on the first weeks of a presidential campaign.

What were the caucuses like? Is it different than the primary states?

Mr. BOB DOLE: No, it's man-to-man, hand-to-hand combat. Talk about grass-root democracy, this is it.

Unidentified Man: The next president of the United States, Senator Bob Dole.

SCHIEFFER: To old war-horse Dole, the '96 campaign convinced him of the truth in that old

saying: Politics ain't beanbags.

Crowd: (In unison) Dole '96! Dole '96!

Mr. DOLE: These are pretty tough. These primaries are tough. I see Howard Dean complaining about getting beaten up by his opponents. And, I mean, I've still got battle scars from Steve Forbes' millions of dollars he spent beating me up in Iowa in '96 and I always thought I may not have won the election in any event, but I always thought it was Steve Forbes and Newt Gingrich that probably took a lot of votes from me. I mean, not that they--Newt didn't intend to, but he had this terrible image and every time Democrats ran an ad it would be Newt and I joined at hip. Newt was always in my--in their attack ad with me.

SCHIEFFER: In an earlier campaign, Dole had learned firsthand that Iowa can be a place where dreams are made and New Hampshire, where they can be shattered.

Mr. DOLE: In '88, when Vice President Bush was the favorite but we won that caucus and Pat Robertson was second and Bush was third and we thought we were on roll, then we got unrolled in New Hampshire, so...

SCHIEFFER: Bush went on to win New Hampshire and the presidency. Dole would finally win his party's nomination in 1996. He never became president but he remains an American original.

A FACE THE NATION Flashback.

And we'll be back with a final word in just a moment.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, ever since that--I read that more people watched Paris Hilton's reality TV show than watched Diane Sawyer's interview with George Bush after the capture of Saddam Hussein, it has really bothered me. Part of the problem for me was I didn't know at the time who Paris Hilton was, but still, I thought, 'There has got to be some reason.' Maybe I thought in this age when political spin rules, we no longer expect our politicians to tell us much, so we just tune all of them out.

But then I reread one of William Manchester's books about Churchill, and that I s--I decided the answer may go beyond that. Because Manchester said that World War I was the first historical event where reality outstripped imagination. What he meant was that the carnage was so horrible, no one could have imagined it, and afterward it produced such revulsion to war that Europe's people were plunged into denial that ran so deep they were unable to see there was something worse coming.

Churchill tried to warn them, but his people ignored him and instead they were transfixed by stories in the British press about the adventures of the vicar of Steedham, who had amazing success seducing waitresses, was found out, defrocked and began a new career taming lions, only to be eaten by one. It was all people could talk about.

Has Paris Hilton become our vicar of Steedham? Was the horror of 9/11 so beyond our imagination that we've tried to escape into the unreality and vulgarity of reality television, rather than coming to grips with the fact that there is far worse ahead if we do not eradicate terrorism? Terrorism is not reality television. It is reality, the reality we have a choice to face or avoid as we begin another year.

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That's it for us. We'll see you next week, right here on FACE THE NATION.