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CBS News

FACE THE NATION

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GUESTS: Mayor RAY NAGIN, (New Orleans)

Fmr. Rep. NEWT GINGRICH, (R-GA)

Dr. JULIE GERBERDING

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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, from New York, New Orleans Mayor Ray Nagin, Republican Newt Gingrich and Julie Gerberding, three Americans who were in the headlines last year and they'll look ahead to this new year.

Perhaps no American city has ever gone through what New Orleans did last year. Will it ever be back to what it was? We'll ask the Mayor Ray Nagin. Who will emerge as the top candidate for president? And could Republicans lose their majorities in Congress? We'll talk about that with Newt Gingrich, the man who led the Republican takeover. How serious is the threat of bird flu and how healthy are Americans? We'll talk about that with the head of the Centers for Disease Control Dr. Julie Gerberding. In this week's essay, I'll have some thoughts of my own on this past year, but, first, Nagin, Gingrich and Gerberding on FACE THE NATION.

Announcer: FACE THE NATION with CBS News chief Washington correspondent Bob Schieffer, and now from CBS News in New York, Bob Schieffer.

SCHIEFFER: And good morning again.

Well, we have made it through another one, and nowhere in this country was 2005 a harder year than it was for the people in New Orleans. And that's why as we look ahead to the next 12 months, we want to start this morning with the mayor of that city Ray Nagin.

Good morning, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor RAY NAGIN (New Orleans, Louisiana): Good morning, Bob. How are you?

SCHIEFFER: Well, I'm fine. And let me just start off with a question that a lot of people around the country are asking, and that is: Are you going to have Mardi Gras this year? I know a lot of people down there say maybe it's not such a good idea. What do you think will happen?

Mayor NAGIN: Well, we've had lots of debate and discussions about that. We will be having a Mardi Gras. It's going to be an eight-day event, two days prior to the Mardi Gras weekend and a full Mardi Gras weekend. We've picked a standardized route where we're going to have adequate protection for everyone. Most of the hotels will be back up and operational. And we're going to move forward. I think it's going to send a wonderful signal to the world that New Orleans is on the road to recovery.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let's just talk a little bit about that. I'd just like to run down a couple of things. How is New Orleans right now? What's the population of the city?

Mayor NAGIN: Well, right now it's probably at about 100,000 and, you know, some experts that I've been talking to, because we're opening up a significant number of both public, private and parochial schools in January, we're expecting the population to double to somewhere around 190,000 to 200,000 people at January which is going to be, you know, little less than half of our original population. Every day we start to see more people coming back, but the real challenge is housing, temporary and long-term housing, but we have enough of a footprint to accommodate about 200,000 to 250,000 people right now.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think New Orleans will ever be as big as it once was? And what was it, about nearly half a million people?

Mayor NAGIN: Yeah, about 460,000 to 480,000 depending upon who was counting, but for the most part, I think we will get to our pre-Katrina census numbers but it's going to take us a while. I mean, we're looking at

probably a three-to five-year period before we can get to those numbers, and it's going to take a lot of hard work. But for the most part, the tourist industry has already stood up. And we are in a position now to accommodate tourists coming to our city.

SCHIEFFER: Well, I know you've got a lot of the French Quarter up and running, as it were. How about your other business? How many businesses are back in operation?

Mayor NAGIN: We have about 1,500 businesses that are back up and operational. And they're working on modified schedules right now. It's not the issue of utilities. It's not the issue that there's water in the streets. The big challenge right now is finding enough workers to go back to their regular extended schedules. As a matter of fact, some businesses are trying to go back to their 24-hour schedules and the big challenge right now is finding the workers. Temporary housing is something that we're really pushing.

SCHIEFFER: And how about housing? Talk about that a little bit. How much of that that you lost have you gotten back?

Mayor NAGIN: Well, we had about 100,000 homes that experienced some type of damage, and we also had certain sections of the city where there was no flooding at all—in Algiers, which is across the river, the Mississippi River, and then most of the areas along sides or adjacent to the river itself, and that footprint is big enough to accommodate about 250,000 people. Then when you start to get in deeper into the city, you start to see where homes had four to six feet; some had, you know, 12 to 15 feet of water. And that's where the challenge is in the rebuilding. Lots of people are gutting their homes out and getting ready for rebuilding.

SCHIEFFER: How about help, Mr. Mayor? Are you getting what you need now from the federal government? We all know about what happened in those days after this hurricane hit, but where does all that stand now?

Mayor NAGIN: Well, you know, we have been lobbying, you know, the federal government, the White House, Congress consistently since the event, after the first two weeks of kind of nuclear crisis management. And we've got some really encouraging signs these past couple of weeks that they're going to rebuild our levees and provide us with support, the \$3.1 billion. There was a GO Zone Act, which were some tax incentives to encourage both businesses and people to move back to the city. And we're working on some housing support as it relates to CDBG grant dollars as well as Congressman Baker is pushing a bill to help people that had—were underinsured or had no insurance. So we're starting to see some momentum. It still could move a lot quicker, in my opinion.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Mayor, there were some hearings; things got pretty hot and heavy. A lot of e-mails got released on both sides. How do you feel about this whole idea of investigations? Do you want to see more emphasis on that, or do you think we need to move on to other things? I'd just like to get your personal take on that.

Mayor NAGIN: Well, you know, I've always said that I think there needs to be a full kind of analysis of what happened so that this never happens again in this nation's history. The timing of these investigations is very awkward because we're still lobbying for support and trying to get our city's economy back up and the state's economy. But other than that, I'd like to see more of a non-partisan, independent investigation going on where we can really get to all levels of government, how they performed, and how do we avoid this situation in the future?

SCHIEFFER: Well, if you had to make a wish list right now, Mr. Mayor, what would it be for this coming year? What do you need? What are the priorities? Where does all this have to go to get New Orleans back to where it was?

Mayor NAGIN: Well, you know, my wish list for 2006 is for, number one, that we rebuild the levees and the hurricane protection systems whereas if another Katrina hit us, that we would be protected. And that's what's been authorized or that's what's being proposed by the president. The second thing that I would wish for is the housing necessary to accelerate a significant number of our citizens coming back to the city. And then the third thing I would wish for would be more support from the entire nation. I want to see corporations signing up for conventions. I want to see people coming to visit New Orleans, to help us rebound our economy or get our economy going in a better direction. And I think Americans are going to do that for us.

SCHIEFFER: Mr. Mayor, I want to thank you very much for being with us today. And I want to wish you the very best in this coming year, to you and also to all of those folks down in New Orleans.

Mayor NAGIN: And my best to you and everyone across the nation.

SCHIEFFER: Thank you.

One thing Americans always talk about, no matter what time of year it is, is politics. And here to talk a little politics from the Republican point of view, the former speaker of the House, Newt Gingrich.

Mr. Gingrich, I'd like to pick up on Hurricane Katrina. You called it a failure of government at every level. Do you think we've learned anything from that?

Former Representative NEWT GINGRICH (Republican, Georgia): I don't think we've learned enough. I think that the challenges we face with avian flu and with other problems—we really need to much more profoundly rethink how government works and bring it into the modern world, bring it into a world of real-time speed and real-time information.

SCHIEFFER: Well, how do you prepare for something like Katrina or for, perhaps, a bird flu epidemic?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, the first thing I'd do is have serious people who lay out what it would take in a certain situation and have the right kind of communications capabilities. We've done it before, much better than we did it at Katrina. I think when you deal with something like avian flu, you've got to look at how are we going to mobilize every nursing home, every pharmacy in the country. You really have to think about how you network what's already out there that could be a huge asset if you're prepared to call on them and to work with them.

SCHIEFFER: Let's talk about politics a little bit. You led the now-famous revolution in 1994 when Republicans became the majority in the House of Representatives. With the scandals we're hearing about now, with some of the other things we're hearing about, are you worried that Republicans have become what you ran against when you ran against the Democrats in '94?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, I think that this coming year, 2006, is going to be a very big year of decision for Republicans. We have to be the party of reform. We can't just be the party of pork barrel. And there are a number of serious questions about it. I think changing some of the rules, as it relates to lobbyists; changing some of the rules, as it relates to elections. I'm very uncomfortable with some of the things I've learned and seen over the last year, as I think most Americans are, and I think Republican leadership in the House and Senate have to confront being recommitted as the party of reform, and not trying to defend things that are, frankly, not defensible.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what do you mean? I mean, what would you reform, the way campaigns are financed? What?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, look, I'd look very seriously at completely rethinking relationship with lobbyists. I'd have—I'd require every lobbying activity to be listed on the THOMAS system, that—the computer system people can access. So you'd know, if you're a member of Congress, whether they went golfing, whether they had dinner. I mean, I'd make this a public and transparent—I'd consider not allowing fund-raisers in Washington. I think this whole system has grown, frankly, a little sick with insiders raising money for insiders to re-elect insiders to do favors for insiders.

And I think this is not just a Republican problem. Don't misunderstand me. But I think we are much more naturally the party of reform than the Democrats are. And our base gets much angrier when we're told that we should put up with things because after all we got pork barrel delivered or we got something good in the transportation bill. Republicans don't go out and vote for that. They vote for trying to change Washington, not trying to defend it.

SCHIEFFER: Well, when you talk about no fund-raising dinners in Washington, what do you mean? People should only have fund-raisers in their district?

Mr. GINGRICH: I think we should seriously consider a principle that when Congress is in session you don't have PAC fund-raisers organized by lobbyists in Washington, DC. Because you now have this game where the lobbyist goes out to raise the money to get access to have the fund-raiser to talk to the member in ways that it becomes a self-fulfilling problem for the entire system.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think the Republican majority in the House and Senate—do you think they're in danger?

Mr. GINGRICH: Yes. I think any time the American people get angry, the majority is in danger. And in this case, Republicans have to recognize they have the president, they have the House, they have the Senate. It's not good enough to attack Nancy Pelosi or attack Governor Dean. They've got to take responsibility. I think we have every reason to think we can get re-elected this year, this coming year, but only if we adopt the right kind of procedures. I think we've got to be seen as a party that is fixing the problem, not as a party that's trying to explain or defend the problem.

SCHIEFFER: A lot of people are saying that maybe George Bush is already a lame duck. Do you think that's so?

Mr. GINGRICH: I think presidents—and I've experienced this in working with and fighting with President Clinton—you know, presidents have enormous latent power. The president of the United States is an extraordinarily powerful position. President Bush is a man of deep convictions, and, in some ways, has shaped history. And I fully expect that for the next three years he'll continue to shape history. I don't think he'll be a lame duck until the last day—when he waves goodbye after the inaugural of the new president.

SCHIEFFER: Do you think the—his whole presidency rests on what happens in Iraq?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, I think that will define it more than any other single thing, unless there's a future problem. I think, frankly, the rise of this new Iranian government with its open hostility, its open statements of a desire to eliminate Israel, its desire to defeat the Anglo-Saxons, may compound this. Because this is a looming danger on the horizon. But certainly how this president handles the Middle East, in general, and wins in Iraq, in particular, will be probably the most important definition of his presidency.

SCHIEFFER: How serious is this problem with Iran?

Mr. GINGRICH: I think it's as serious as the problem with Adolf Hitler in 1935. I mean, you have a leader of the Iranian government who has said publicly, unequivocally that he wants to defeat the Anglo-Saxons and eliminate Israel from the face of the Earth. When he was attacked and criticized he redoubled his statements. He denied that the Holocaust ever existed. He suggested that Israel be moved to Europe and people are not taking him seriously. This is the leader of the Iranian government, a government which is the largest funder of terrorism in the world, a government which has a clear track record of killing Americans, going back to 1983, and a government which is trying to get nuclear weapons. I think it's very serious.

SCHIEFFER: You have said that America, I think, is in need, and I'm just going to quote you here, of "bold fixes for major issues, health care, education and so on." Are these problems that can be solved by either party or is there some kind of bipartisanship that's going to have to come into play here? How serious are the problems facing this country right now?

Mr. GINGRICH: Lookit, I think the challenges are so great that if we want to give our children and our grandchildren the kind of successful dramatic country that you and I were fortunate enough to inherit from our parents and grandparents, that we have to find ways to have an honest dialogue across the aisle. And I think this is a dialogue—I've suggested in both Iowa and New Hampshire that in 2007 and early 2008 they only hold bipartisan meetings. Don't have partisan gatherings for the presidential candidates. Don't let the Republicans go off and hide and the Democrats go off and hide, but jointly hold the meetings so you have real discussion and everybody's in the same room talking. And I think it's that serious. I think we have to confront—because if we don't, 10, 15 years from now all these problems are going to get dramatically bigger and dramatically harder.

SCHIEFFER: Let's play a little prognostication game here.

Mr. GINGRICH: OK.

SCHIEFFER: It's very, very early, but by the end of this year we'll probably know who the people are going to be that are going to seek the presidency. Who do you think that'll be in either p—who do you think will wind up with the presidency in either party, and I must ask you, are you planning on running?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, if you had to bet as of today you'd have to say that Hillary Clinton is clearly the front-runner in the Democratic Party. If Senator Clinton wants to run, and I think she does, she has enormous advantages. Certainly Governor Warner is very attractive, coming out of Virginia as a Democrat. I wouldn't be surprised to see Senator Feingold run. There are a number of people—Governor Richardson may decide to run, from New Mexico. And you can't tell. I mean, this early—many—as you know, you've covered these races for years—many things happen between the early analysis and the final event.

SCHIEFFER: What about Republicans?

Mr. GINGRICH: On the Republican side, if you assume that Vice President Cheney and Governor Jeb Bush do not run, I think it's a fairly open opportunity. I think that you'd have to say that Mayor Giuliani and Senator McCain are the front-runners right now. You would certainly have to say that Senator George Allen, Senator Bill Frist, I think Governor Mitt Romney, and then as—a little bit more distant, Senator Brownback and Senator Hagel are going to run. And you know, I think there are a number of possible candidates. I think it's—I think the Republican side may be the most open that we have seen in my lifetime. I don't remember any...

SCHIEFFER: And what about Newt Gingrich? Does he figure in this?

Mr. GINGRICH: Well, I think—I'm very flattered to have my name mentioned and you can't tell. I think the key for right now is to try to find solutions for my party and for my country for 2006 and to try to get things

working better this year, this coming year. But I certainly am not ruling out the possibility of running in 2008 and I promise you that I'll show up and chat about it with you long before that announcement.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. GINGRICH: Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: Thanks a lot.

We'll be back in just a minute.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Another thing that Americans will certainly be thinking about over the coming months is their health, and who better to talk about that than to bring in Dr. Julie Gerberding who heads the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta.

Dr. Gerberding, thank you for joining us this morning.

It says on your Web site that each day at the Centers for Disease Control, we try to imagine a safer, healthier world. Will 2006 be safer and healthier?

Dr. JULIE GERBERDING (Director, Centers for Disease Control): Well, we'll certainly do our best to help support that. There are a lot of important issues that people need to be aware of and a lot we can do to help our families and our children be healthier and safer, but we also have to be concerned about those urgent threats. And CDC is on the job there, too.

SCHIEFFER: Well, let's talk about one of those. And I'd like to know if you think it is an urgent threat and that is this idea of bird flu. Is it just a matter of time before it gets to the United States?

Dr. GERBERDING: You know, I wish we knew the answer to that. We are very concerned about the H5N1 influenza that's in Asia and Eastern Europe right now. We have no idea whether it will actually become transmissible from one person to another efficiently, but we've got to take the steps now to get prepared for that. We've probably never been closer to a pandemic than the year in 1917. And so when we see the ominous signs of this very bad virus continuing to propagate there, we do need to take it seriously and solve some of the problems that would be in our way of effective response in the United States.

SCHIEFFER: When you call it a pandemic, what you're meaning is a worldwide epidemic.

Dr. GERBERDING: Yes, we're talking about a situation where a disease is being transmitted in every country or where waves of that disease move literally around the globe. That happens. Pandemics do happen. We've had three in the last 100 years involving influenza. And there's certainly every reason to suspect that it will happen again and that's why whether we're preparing for H5N1 or some future pandemic, the steps we're taking now really will save lives and will really help us do more to protect people in the future.

SCHIEFFER: Well, you know, after Katrina, we all began to talk about preparedness after seeing the debacle that happened after those hurricanes. Are we prepared now to handle a pandemic?

Dr. GERBERDING: You know, frankly we're not as prepared as we need to be. We're certainly doing more today than we were even two years ago. So we're making fast progress, but we've got a lot of work to do. We've got to get a vaccine supply that we can count on. We've got to get more and better antiviral drugs. And we've

got to have every single link in our public health system as strong as it can be so we can detect this problem and do the things at the local community level that we need to do to save lives.

SCHIEFFER: Well, it sounds to me like when I hear you say that that maybe we're at ground zero on getting ready for this.

Dr. GERBERDING: No, we're not at ground zero. And I do want to be clear that a great deal of work has gone on. We're visiting states now and we've seen some tremendous progress and some tremendous innovation at the community level. So I'm heartened to see how much work already has gone forward, but we do have a couple of bottlenecks. One of them is vaccine production and modernization and the other is the drug treatment and the capacity of our health system to absorb a tremendous increase in the requirements for care. We've got to be really creative and innovative in those compartments as well.

SCHIEFFER: Well, what should families—should individuals and families have a plan?

Dr. GERBERDING: You know, I'm glad you asked that because there are some very specific things that people and families can do. First of all, just get informed and understand what is being done at the community and the school and the workplace to help protect people from this kind of a threat. But there are some specific steps you can take in the home. First of all, the whole family needs to understand respiratory hygiene, and by that, I mean, the old-fashioned things that you can do to help prevent the spread of germs in your family. Covering your mouth and nose when you sneeze and cough really are important. Keeping your hands clean really can make a difference. But also I think one of the things we learned from Katrina is that it makes sense for families to have a family disaster plan. You know, if we asked Americans today how many people have a week's supply of food in the house, probably not very much people would be able to eat much more than pasta if they had to feed their family for a period time. I mean, we've got to have a mentality that says, 'Let's prepare for disaster so that we can occupy our day-to-day time with other more interesting pursuits and we know in the background our families are safe.'

SCHIEFFER: Well, now, the World Health Organization talks about a quarantine at the first sign of something like this. Do you think a quarantine would work in this country? And would you advocate that?

Dr. GERBERDING: You know, 'quarantine' is a word that has a lot of bad meanings for many people. We talk about modern quarantine as a way of creating some commonsense steps to decrease the chance that disease will spread from one person to another. If a pandemic evolves in one part of the world, there are some immediate things that we will do, in support with our international partners, including isolating the people who are sick so they don't spread to others, and perhaps quarantining their immediate contacts. And by that, we just mean asking them to stay home or to separate themselves from other people in the community.

The old-fashioned concept of quarantine, involving military forces or law enforcement agents, forcing people to do something that they wouldn't ordinarily do, is really an outdated concept. We think of it more today as social distancing, where we would close schools or sometimes close large meetings, ask people to avoid as much face-to-face contact with others in the community. But I don't think any of us are thinking about those kind of draconian measures to really completely quarantine a community or even quarantine a country.

SCHIEFFER: All right. Well, Dr. Gerberding, you've outlined what could be a very serious problem, but as you say, the first step, I suppose, that we should all be aware of it and what possibly could happen. Thank you very much, Doctor.

Dr. GERBERDING: Thank you.

SCHIEFFER: And when we come back, my final word.

(Announcements)

SCHIEFFER: Finally today, I always loved those editorial cartoons when the old year was represented by a bearded man who handed over the keys to the new year, which was always represented by a baby. The cartoonists don't draw that much anymore, but if they did, the old 2005 wouldn't just have a long beard. He'd look like that man whose wife sewed him up in a tow sack when she found him asleep, and then worked him over with a baseball bat.

The key word for 2005 was 'disaster': natural disasters, hurricanes and earthquakes, and political disasters that all but drowned the administration: bumbled responses to Katrina, Supreme Court nominees that had to be withdrawn, top aides indicted and then getting caught spying on American citizens. And that was just at the White House. On Capitol Hill, Tom DeLay was indicted. A bribery scandal threatened to envelop Republicans and Democrats. And speaking of Democrats, they did a lot of finger-pointing but didn't come up with much else that mattered.

There was some good news, Iraq's elections, but no one predicted the problem of Iraq has been solved. And once again, the American people showed themselves to be generous and caring for those in trouble.

The best thing to say about 2005 is that it is over and we survived. We're all still on the right side of the grass, and that's reason enough to say: Happy new year.

We'll see you next week right here on FACE THE NATION.